



## MR. WILSON'S LIFE OF CARLYLE.

- VOL. I. CARLYLE TILL MARRIAGE (1795-1826)
- VOL. II. CARLYLE TO "THE FRENCH REVOLUTION" (1826-37)
- VOL. III. CARLYLE ON CROMWELL AND OTHERS (1837-48)
- VOL. IV. CARLYLE AT HIS ZENITH (1848-53)
- VOL. V. CARLYLE TO THREESCORE-AND-TEN (1853-65)
- VOL. VI. CARLYLE IN OLD AGE (1865-81)







THOMAS CARLYLE IN OLD AGE

*From a portrait in the possession of Sir Thomas Oliver, said to have been painted in Herkomer's studio and to have received final touches from the master painter himself*

*By permission of Sir Thomas Oliver*

# CARLYLE

IN OLD AGE

(1865—1881)

BY

DAVID ALEC WILSON

AND

DAVID WILSON MACARTHUR

LONDON



## PREFACE

THIS is the sixth, and last, volume of David Alec Wilson's *Carlyle*, of which the previous five volumes have already been published. My uncle did not live to complete his task, and had none of the present volume ready for publication when he died; but it seems to me that no apology is required for placing his name upon the title-page. There is little if anything here, indeed, actually written by him, but since I have relied almost entirely upon his collection of material, and his library, it is fitting that the credit for the work should go first of all to him.

My task has been to select the best of the material available, to put it together, and to link it up with the information in standard sources—volumes of letters, biographies, and so on—in order to make so far as possible a connected narrative of those last years of Carlyle's life. I believe that I have written nothing to which my uncle would have taken exception; I believe also that I have continued his presentation of his hero's character along the lines that he himself would have followed. I have sought to avoid everything in the nature of controversy, in which I do not consider I should be qualified to join; but nothing of value in my uncle's original notes and the research to which he devoted his life has been omitted.

I should explain that no attempt has been made to summarise Carlyle's teaching or significance, since it was evident that nothing of the sort had been contemplated by Wilson himself; the record of Carlyle's life speaks for itself.

I have to thank Dr. Meikle, of the National Library of

Scotland, and Mr. M. R. Dobie, Keeper of the Manuscripts, for their kindness and co-operation in examining original manuscripts, and the executors of the late Mr. Alexander Carlyle for permission to quote from the published and unpublished letters in the Library; as well as Messrs. John Lane (The Bodley Head), Ltd., publishers of Mr. Alexander Carlyle's *New Letters of Thomas Carlyle*, copyrighted by them. To Professor Geoffrey Bullough, of Sheffield University, I owe thanks for copies of the Carlyle-Laing letters in the Edinburgh University Library, and to many correspondents too numerous to name for information sent by them. Acknowledgments to holders of other copyrights have already been made in the previous volumes, and may be held to apply here.

DAVID WILSON MACARTHUR.

NETHER CLOSE,  
LANE END,  
BUCKS.

March 1, 1934.

## MEMOIR OF DAVID ALEC WILSON

IT was as a student of eighteen at Glasgow University that the late David Alec Wilson first conceived the plan of collecting, while there was yet time, all that could be known about the life and character of Thomas Carlyle.

Born in Glasgow on January 1, 1864, he was educated at Hutcheson's Grammar School, where he was twice dux, and at Glasgow University, where he covered himself with distinctions. In 1883 he passed into the Indian Civil Service, and later proceeded to Burma, where he plunged into his work with a tremendous determination to fight at all costs for the interests of the native Burmans. Scrupulous honesty and close attention to the minutest detail distinguished his career there, and many of his judgments as a very young judge, reversed by higher courts, were finally upheld when full investigation had brought to light all the facts upon which his decisions had been based. Years of experience on the bench taught him to read men, to cross-examine relentlessly, and to detect falsehood even when most carefully concealed. It was this which fitted him so signally for the self-appointed task that later was to become his life-work.

At first, as a hobby, he began collecting material, noting down every scrap he could read or hear relating to Carlyle; then the necessity for correcting the false impression left by Froude impelled him to set down his own conclusions, and the arguments in their favour, that had been arrived at through the qualities of judicial penetration developed by his professional life. His first book, written under considerable difficulties, as he never spared himself in his official capacity, was published in 1898, with the title *Mr. Froude and Carlyle*, and did much to clear the way for the work that was to come.

As an incidental, he collected a volume of true tales of wild animals, each one of which was fully authenticated, and this appeared in 1910 as *Anecdotes of Big Cats and Other*

## viii MEMOIR OF DAVID ALEC WILSON

*Beasts*. Hundreds of stories were rejected for lack of absolute corroboration, for he had all Carlyle's respect for the truth, and nothing but the truth, and, since sifting evidence had grown to be second nature with him, he would admit nothing that was not pure fact.

At the earliest possible moment he retired, on pension, and went to live in Ayr, attracted by the mild climate. By then, his collection of Carlyle material had grown to such dimensions that he had definitely decided upon publication, an idea that had been at the back of his mind from the first. But first he brought out two small volumes intended still further to clear the way. *The Truth About Carlyle* demolished the obscene libel that had been spread regarding Carlyle, and so made it possible to avoid dwelling upon it in the Biography to come, while *The Faith of All Sensible People* was a simple exposition of Carlyle's creed, dedicated to 'the Young Ladies of Queen Margaret College', as his cousin, Janet Ann Galloway, had been one of the founders, and for many years the first unsalaried mistress, of the first venture in higher education for women in Scotland.

Thereafter work began on the Biography itself. Its form was conditioned by the nature of the material, which consisted largely of short extracts from memoirs, reminiscences, biographies and autobiographies, letters, magazine articles, etc., and personal records of people who had known Carlyle, jotted down at interviews. One furlough had been devoted to crossing to Canada and America to see Professor Charles Eliot Norton and Carlyle's youngest sister, Mrs. Hanning, and he had sought out and talked with scores of others who had things to tell. The result was a collection that would have filled more than a dozen large volumes, and it required many years of unremitting labour to reduce this to manageable proportions.

The first volume, *Carlyle Till Marriage*, was completed and published in 1923, and the others at intervals until the appearance of the fifth, *Carlyle to Threescore-and-Ten*, in 1929. So far as possible, annotation was minimised, although sufficient remained to make the record he gave of Carlyle's life obviously authentic; now and again items appeared which he had learned by word of mouth, and he adopted the phrase 'from a credible witness' to obviate the need for long explanations. This procedure has been criticised; it need only be pointed out that to a man whose



career had been the examination of witnesses, most of whom were essentially untrustworthy, in court, the phrase he used covered a great deal. It meant that in spite of persistent cross-examination and every effort to shake the witness, he was thoroughly satisfied as to his integrity. From my own experience of boyhood, I may say that it would have required a witness much more astute than the ordinary, and with a great deal to gain by his astuteness, to survive such an examination without betraying himself if his testimony were false.

A great mass of material had to be thrown out, for lack of space, and naturally the first items to go were those that seemed in any way doubtful; what remains is only what Wilson believed to be fully authenticated; and at the same time it may be claimed that little if anything of real note connected with Carlyle has been omitted.

With the publication of the fifth volume, it became apparent that the strain of nearly twenty years of persistent overwork, at a time of life when such of his Service colleagues as still survived were enjoying a well-earned leisure, had had its effect. He had only once been seriously ill—with typhoid as a student—and he had a constitution of iron and a seemingly inexhaustible fund of physical and mental energy; but he had never taken a holiday, or even laid aside his work for more than a day at a time, through all those years, and he had worn himself out.

For months after *Carlyle to Threescore-and-Ten* appeared, he was ailing, then became seriously ill, and was unable to resume work. The last volume, which he had hoped to complete within a year, remained untouched, and although he rallied several times, and attempted to continue at it, he found that the old power of concentration and the old energy were gone. He never fully recovered; and on April 28, 1933, he died, with his life-work uncompleted.

He leaves behind a lasting monument in one of the most exhaustive and ambitious biographies since Boswell, the fruit of virtually a life-time of devotion to his self-imposed task, an inspiring record of personal sacrifice in pursuit of what he conceived to be an urgent duty—to give to the world, while there was yet time, a complete account of the best of all that is to be known about Thomas Carlyle.



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	<i>(From a painting in the possession of Sir Thomas Oliver, said to have been painted in Herkomer's studio, and to have received the finishing touches from the master himself. Reproduced by permission of Sir Thomas Oliver)</i>	
II	THOMAS CARLYLE, WITH DR. JOHN CARLYLE AND MARY CARLYLE AITKEN . . .	<i>Facing page 172</i>
	<i>(From a photograph by J. Patrick, Edinburgh)</i>	
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	<i>(By J. MacNeill Whistler (Glasgow Corporation Art Galleries). Reproduced by permission of the Glasgow Corporation Art Galleries)</i>	
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	<i>(Scottish National Portrait Gallery. From a portrait by Helen Allingham, reproduced by permission)</i>	



BOOK XXVI  
RECTORSHIP

1865—66



AFTER *FREDERICK*

(1865)

**T**HE *History of Frederick the Great* was finished and done with, the labour of years, and with it Carlyle's literary career practically ended. The phase that followed was that of the 'Sage of Chelsea', and if it had its great moments, of happiness and of grief, it was, in the main, a slow march on the downhill of life.

He was completely exhausted, and destined not to be granted the large measure of peace that complete recovery would require.

'I am the idlest of all mankind,' he wrote, on March 1, to his brother, Doctor John, in Dumfries; 'feel as if I had not only got done with *Friedrich*, but with all the work I had to do in this Planet. A gloomy but quiet *collapse* there is, in mind and body;—a world left very *vacant* in comparison, and much less lovely to me than it once was.'

Sir M. E. Grant Duff, calling on March 5 with Arthur Russell, found him 'sadly distressed for want of an occupation', and 'reading Gordon's Tacitus *faute de mieux*.'<sup>1</sup>

On Wednesday, March 8, he took his wife to Seaton in Devonshire, where the young widow, Lady Ashburton, piously eager to do everything her husband might have liked her to do, was waiting for them at the station with a heap of shawls and rugs, in which they snugly wrapped Mrs. Carlyle, covering her very face. Then they drove to Lady Ashburton's house, Seaforth Lodge, where the Carlyles stayed happily for about a month.

Sir Walter Trevelyan and his wife were neighbours here and often fellow-guests, and the two men rode out together almost every day—rather 'dull', but assuredly restful for a man worn out by protracted labour.

<sup>1</sup> *Notes From a Diary*, Sir M. E. Grant Duff, p. 298.

The place suited Mrs. Carlyle. 'I am just as much at home with Lady Ashburton,' she reported to Mrs. Braid, of Edinburgh, in a letter of March 12, 'as with Mrs. Russell: they are the two kindest hostesses on earth.'

Her husband found that she 'did really well, slept wonderfully and drove out almost daily.

'And her talk there with me, and with others there; nobody had such a charming tongue, for truth, discernment, graceful humour, and ingenuity; ever patient, too, and smiling over her many pains and sorrows.'<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, Mrs. Carlyle was loath to leave Devon, writing rather reluctantly to Mrs. Oliphant, on March 29:

'We are coming home on Saturday. . . . We are not wished to go. Indeed a more cordial, more generous Hostess than Lady A. does not I believe exist on this Planet!'

On the return to London in April, Lady Ashburton accompanied her late guests, and shortly after Woolner set to work on a marble bust of Carlyle which she had commissioned.<sup>3</sup> He had many photographs taken, and Mrs. Carlyle had to go often to the studio and point out faults she saw; for, Woolner declared, it was as difficult to catch a likeness of Carlyle as of a flash of lightning. To his brother in Dumfries, Carlyle wrote (April 12): 'I am tied up . . . by a daily journey to Welbeck Street, and dull session of two hours there, under the sculptural manipulation of Woolner,—who, it does not appear to me, will make a Bust of much resemblance to me at the end of the job!'

Later he again reported to Dr. Carlyle: '"Bust" still a botheration to me: hang it!'

The sittings had shortly to stop, on Carlyle's departure for Scotland, and the bust was not completed for many years.

Ford Madox Brown's picture, 'Work',<sup>4</sup> was exhibited that year. The artist had conceived the idea of introducing into it the Rev. Frederic D. Maurice as the workingman's friend, and Carlyle as the Prophet of Work. He had 'no difficulty with Maurice,' Moncure Conway reports,<sup>5</sup> 'but Carlyle refused to sit, and could barely be persuaded to accompany the artist to South Kensington, and stand against

<sup>2</sup> T. C.'s *Reminiscences*, July 23.

<sup>3</sup> *Thomas Woolner, His Life and Letters*, by Amy Woolner, p. 340.

<sup>4</sup> Now the property of Manchester City. See *Carlyle to Threescore-and-Ten*, Book XXIII, Chapter XXXIII.

<sup>5</sup> *Thomas Carlyle*, by Moncure D. Conway, p. 118.



a rail while a photographer took the full-length which Madox Brown needed. Carlyle made a grimace, however, and said, "Can I go now?"

The picture represents Maurice gazing in orthodox solemnity at some men working on a public road, with Carlyle beside him, laughing. Carlyle, hearing that the artist feared he might have displeased him, wrote praising his performance, and added, to set his mind at rest, that Mrs. Carlyle went to see it oftener than himself, and was a great admirer of it.<sup>6</sup>

## II

## AT HOME IN CHEYNE ROW

(1865)

MRS. CARLYLE was 'like her husband,' Tyndall was fond of saying, and has left on record.<sup>1</sup> 'She could hit off a character or peculiarity with a simple stroke of the tongue. Her stories sparkled with wit and humour. The only intimation that I ever had of past unhappiness on her part was given during an evening visit when I found her alone'—and which may have been in 1865.

'She then told me that some years previously she had kept a journal, in which, to relieve her mind, she wrote down her most secret thoughts and feelings. She condemned, as she spoke to me, this habit of introspection. One day she had left the book upon her desk, and on returning found a visitor actually looking into the journal. He probably regarded it as a mere literary book; but her wrath and rage, on finding sayings and sentiments intended for her eye alone, and kept secret even from Carlyle, thus pried into, were uncontrollable. As she spoke to me her anger seemed to revive, and its potency could not be doubted. When I quitted her, I carried away the impression that her maturer judgment had caused her to regard these journal entries as the foolish utterances of a too sensitive past.'

It is a commonplace that no one can truly divine the feelings of another. There is always room for surmise,

<sup>6</sup> *Ford Madox Brown*, by Ford Madox Hueffer, p. 196.

<sup>1</sup> *New Fragments*, by John Tyndall, 1892, p. 370, footnote.

however, and it is likely that the year now passing, 1865-6, her last, was also one of the pleasantest.

The setting Sun, and Music at the close,  
As the last taste of sweets, is sweetest last.

Certainly Carlyle himself came to believe this, when all was over.

The legend that Carlyle was 'gey ill to live with' owes its origin to an unfortunate misunderstanding of his friend and literary executor, Froude. The phrase was his mother's, used to him, as it might have been by any Scots mother to any son, in chiding some trivial misdemeanour. In a letter to him Mrs. Carlyle quoted it—Carlyle's footnote annotation being: 'Mother's allocution to me once in an unreasonable moment of mine.' To Froude, who had long cherished the conviction that a genius such as Carlyle's must be difficult to live with in the domestic circle, it became proverbial. In his biography he repeats it no less than four times, to the astounded bewilderment of the family; for, indeed, to all of them Carlyle was known as of amiable disposition, and always the delight of his mother.

Moncure Conway reports Mrs. Alexander Carlyle, who often stayed with the Carlyles, as saying: 'If uncle and aunt lived unhappily, I never discovered it; none of their relations knew it, and I am sure they did not know it themselves. Mr. Froude alone knows it.'<sup>2</sup> Which seems conclusive enough.

Once Froude and Conway were passing an evening with the Carlyles, when Conway mentioned a visit he had made at Ostend to the American artist, George Catlin, who had lived and painted among the aborigines of the West. Carlyle was interested, recalling an early pamphlet entitled 'Shut your Mouth!' in which Catlin related that the Mandan Indians believed that diseases entered the body through the mouth, so that the squaws were careful to close the lips of their sleeping children, a precaution which kept measles, scarlatina, and other juvenile ailments at bay.

Mrs. Carlyle had an amusing anecdote on that very point. In Conway's words, 'once,' she related, 'when more ill than usual, she hid it from Carlyle, whose work was very hard. One evening, just after tea, Carlyle began to read, and she lay on the sofa gasping, when he turned and said, "Hadh't you better shut your mouth?"' She said she felt

<sup>2</sup> *Autobiography* of Moncure D. Conway.

like throwing the teacup at him. It turned out, however, that Carlyle had perceived the trouble she was trying to conceal, and in his anxiety it had occurred to him that Catlin's prescription—"Keep your mouth shut!"—might help her.'

Incredibly, the story has been quoted as an example of Carlyle's rudeness to his wife.

On April 15th, 1865, President Abraham Lincoln had been murdered, and it was probably in this year, when the Civil War in America was ending, that a bright girl in her teens, Hedwig von Reichenbach, who had been living there and was now returning to Germany, gave Carlyle a bit of her mind. She thought the War a very fine thing, and was violently moved when Carlyle expressed a different opinion—'self-murder of a million brother Englishmen,' as he later put it, 'for the sake of sheer *phantasms*, and totally *false* theories upon the Nigger.' Hedwig ended by telling him, flatly: 'You simply do not know what you are talking about.'

Her brother and the others present were 'aghast'; but Carlyle was not disturbed, remarking quietly: 'This young person is wanting in reverence.'<sup>3</sup> She for her part could only wonder at their wonder.

Sir Frederick Burton, curator of the National Gallery, who was naturally acquainted with Carlyle as one of the trustees of the National Portrait Gallery, describes Carlyle relaxing in his own house, sitting at the side of the grate in the dining-room, as he was so often found, his habit being to blow the smoke from his pipe directly up the chimney. A visitor enquired how golf, the national game, was played in Scotland. Whereupon Carlyle, without rising, 'gave a complete picture of the game, links and all,' omitting none of the contingencies likely to arise, and concluding, dryly: 'And then they all go to a public house and have a dinner of corned beef and cabbage. The Scots are a grave people.'

Sir Frederick Burton tells also of a breakfast with the Fellows of the Zoo<sup>4</sup> when the secretary made some laudatory

<sup>3</sup> Certified to D. A. W. by a friend, Mrs. Fargus, 24.2.1908, and again 16.7.1915. The Countess Hedwig was then dead; but Mrs. Fargus knew and consulted her brother, who had been present, and her sister, both friends of Carlyle and then living.

<sup>4</sup> *Notes from the Life of an Ordinary Mortal*, by A. G. C. Liddell, pp. 191-2.

remarks about his own society, concluding: 'Don't you think so, Mr. Carlyle?'

Carlyle was 'eating a chop at the time', and retorted: 'I hate Zoological Gardens, since I went to the Regent's Park and there saw a beast walking round and round everlastingly, till it had made a white track round its cage; and it glared at me through the bars.' As he spoke Carlyle showed his teeth and seemed to 'glare with his eyes'.

On another occasion, he spoke with wrath to Ruskin and Moncure Conway of having seen live mice put into the cages of the snakes at the Gardens. 'He watched a rattle-snake not yet hungry,' Conway reports, 'but with its cruel glittering eye fixed upon the mouse, whose every limb was trembling with terror. Such "laws of this universe" as the instinct of snakes to prey on mice did not silence Carlyle's protests against cruelty. It was largely through his influence that vivisection was restricted.'

It may have been the conversation of Charles Dickens that made Carlyle go and see for himself the atrocities then done at the Zoo.<sup>5</sup>

### III

#### IN SUMMER QUARTERS

(1865)

ON Sunday, May 21, Carlyle took leave of Neuberg, as he was bound next day for Dumfries. He had planned the trip in Devon, and Mrs. Carlyle had decided against accompanying him, hoping, however, to go north later, and perhaps visit in Edinburgh her old nurse, Mrs. Braid, who had recently lost her invalid son.

She did not feel able to face the fatigue of much travelling, and Carlyle intended to pay visits in Edinburgh, Dumfries, and elsewhere during the summer. Another objection to going was that among her husband's people there was not always 'accommodation for us both at one time, as we are both bad sleepers and need a room a piece!' In any case, she was contemplating a reshuffle of rooms in Chelsea, which required her presence, either on the spot or within easy reach, so that she could descend upon the

<sup>5</sup> *Charles Dickens*, by John Forster, III, pp. 145-6, footnote.

workmen without warning, and thus be sure of keeping them diligent.

Before the end of May, Carlyle went on from Dumfries to the Gill, 'my Sister Mary's (Mrs. Austin's) poor little rustic farm-place' on Solway side, where he stayed resting for two months.

He was met at Cummertrees Station, about a mile from the Gill, by Thomas Nelson, a sturdy lad of eleven, big for his age.

'Mrs. Austin's daughters, whom I had known well all my life, told me what train to wait for,' Nelson related,<sup>1</sup> 'and I soon knew him by sight as he stepped out. He handed me his bag and spoke pleasantly to me on the way to the farm, and when we arrived gave me half-a-crown. I don't remember anything he said. I was too young to heed him particularly. I always met him afterwards. The Austin girls told me he would rather not have the gig. Sometimes he was chatty, sometimes grumpy—would just let out a grumph and hand me his bag and never say anything. On the grumpy days he would not pause at the farm and talk to me and give me the half-crown with his own hands; but it was always given to me—always.'

Mrs. Carlyle had her own plans to occupy her during her husband's absence. She set to work to remove his study from the sky-lit garret to a downstairs room, transforming the garret into a servant's bedroom. The commotion, once it was fairly in train, proved too much for her, however, and she fled—perhaps as much to escape the pervading smell of fresh paint as anything else. At first she sought refuge in the houses of friends, and was for a time in Upper Tooting, the guest of Mrs. Alexander MacMillan, whose daughter described how she used to hear her father 'say how much she loved the little attentions shown her by my mother, saying, "Make of me, my dear, I love to be made of."'<sup>2</sup>

But in June she fled the city altogether, and went to stay awhile with Mrs. Russell, in Thornhill. Carlyle visited her there, to reinforce Mrs. Russell's arguments to persuade her to make a longer stay. However, her illness continued, and even the quiet of the Dumfriesshire countryside, and the affection of her friend, which Dr. Quain had hoped would prove efficacious, did nothing to relieve the gnawing pain in her disabled right arm, or to restore her lost vitality.

<sup>1</sup> To D. A. W., on 7.5.1924. Nelson, a gardener, was then living near Ayr, and at over seventy an excellent witness.

<sup>2</sup> *Life and Letters of Alexander MacMillan*, by C. L. Graves, p. 293.

She was anxious to have the new room all in readiness for her husband's return south in the Autumn, and besides, as she wrote to her cook-housekeeper, on June 20: 'I long to be home again, where, when ill, one has always the consolation of perfect liberty to be as ugly and stupid and disagreeable as ever one likes!'

So Carlyle had to report to Neuberger<sup>3</sup>: 'She talks always of being home again', and he concluded that he must submit to her determination to go back to Chelsea as soon as the month originally arranged for at Thornhill should be completed.

He went to see her off, travelling with her from Dumfries to Annan, much perturbed because her only attendant was a new servant, several carriages away on the train. Some years before, Mrs. Welsh had been nursed in her last illness at Thornhill by an old servant, Mrs. Hiddlestone, who after her mistress's death, while Carlyle was winding up affairs, did everything about the house so long as he remained there. Mrs. Carlyle thereafter invited her to come to London with her two girls, sure that they would find good situations, but the old woman preferred to stay at home.

Each year since then, Mrs. Carlyle had sent her an annual present, a shawl one year, a cap another, and always on New Year's Day five shillings for a pound of tea. As often as she was in Thornhill she went to see her, and in August, 1864, had noticed that she was ill. Mrs. Hiddlestone's daughter Jessie gave up a good situation in Edinburgh to return home and nurse her mother, who died in May of the following year. Mrs. Russell suggested that the girl would suit Mrs. Carlyle, who promptly wrote to her, and after suitable condolences continued<sup>4</sup>: 'Mrs. Russell tells me you would come to London if we can come to an agreement. . . . First, let me tell you why you seem preferable to anyone here. You are Margaret Hiddlestone's daughter. Your grandfather at Castlehill taught me to ride when a child of eight years old. I remember you at Mrs. Russell's—a bonnie young woman who dashed about with great activity; but who made a noise with the fire-irons and scuttle and doors, and kept me constantly jumping.

'My housemaid has to do the housework, to answer the door, to wait at table, to be the least bit of a lady's maid

<sup>3</sup> Unpublished Letters.

<sup>4</sup> *Cornhill Magazine*, October, 1901, pp. 457-8, where it is printed at length.

to me, and the least bit of valet to Mr. Carlyle. As the house is of moderate size, and as we have no dinner parties, and as both Mr. C. and myself are orderly, the work is certainly not heavy. The washing is all given out; only the servants wash their own clothes—there is a little garden to dry them in. I should not like you to come if you could do better for yourself.'

Jessie Hiddlestone, it appeared, was willing to risk that, and Mrs. Carlyle to risk the noise with the fire-irons and scuttle and doors, and they agreed upon a six months' trial, from May till November, Jessie to await her new mistress at Thornhill.

So they travelled down to London by the same train, to continue the onslaught upon the house.

## IV

## LETTERS FROM THE GILL

(1865)

CARLYLE remained for a while longer with his sister at the Gill, contenting himself mainly with letter-writing.

One letter is exhibited as a curiosity in a glass case in the National Portrait Gallery in London:

THE GILL, ANNAN, N.B.

7th June, 1865.

SIR,

If the Trustees are unanimous for a picture of Father Matthew, I could by no means think of standing in the way, by myself, of such a desire and determination on their part. Otherwise I must, for my own share, confess to serious doubts whether Father Matthew, author merely of a temporary row against whisky in various quarters, can have solid claim to a place among the great men of the British Nation.

I dissent, therefore, or I assent, according to the *already* state of the matter in committee,—which let our noble Presidt. please to interpret in my absence.

I remain, Sir, Yrs. Truly,

T. CARLYLE.

This was interpreted as assent, and Father Matthew's portrait was bought at once for the Gallery.<sup>1</sup>

Next day, June 8, writing to Neuberg, he offered him Noggs as a gift. The earlier offers to others were for a sale on easy terms.

'I perceive I shall have to give him away to somebody; and you are the first I apply to,—you who deserve far other "gifts" from me (had I got them, or did you need them) beyond any other person! . . .

'Before September I am not likely to see the old detested element, of Penny Newspapers, Philanthropy, Italian Organs, and Railway Miracle again. One's view of the world gets very sad and sombre, contemptuous to a painful degree, but not angry, at this safe distance of years and miles: view as of something *not* in any way to be remedied or helped; fallen into the hands of the Primeval Powers and silently Recording Destinies inexorably exact and just,—who will without fail do to us and it what *is* best, tho' it seems cruel as Eternal Death! Amen.

'Your account of Mill is very curious. Strange indeed to see the peculiar Trismegistus, and "Thinker of Thinkers", whom the washed portion of the English Populace has got hauled aloft at this rate. A most clear, ingenuous, logically limpid soul; and of such a depth as to believe in the suffrage of Niggers and persons that can do a sum in the rule of three! Poor Mill, I found it proper (tho' pressed to the contrary) to hold off entirely from this matter; believing that probably it will, in either event, turn out very miserably for him.'

Which was what happened, as anyone can see to-day. By the reorganisation of the India Office in consequence of the Mutiny, Mill had got superannuation on a good pension in 1858, when he was still under 53; and now in 1865 he was coming into the Commons, where he was to distinguish himself rather absurdly by fulminating against Governor Eyre of Jamaica, and little else.

Meanwhile Carlyle was lying on the grass at Cummertrees, reading Boileau, sauntering or riding about, and comforting his wife by telling her how much he was enjoying this rest in the country.

'Not a sound all night at the Gill, except, at stated times, the grinding brief clash of the railway, which, if I hear it at

<sup>1</sup> June, 1865, from the artist himself, E. D. Leahy, as told to D. A. W. by E. D. Milner, N.P.G.



all, is a lash or loud crack of the *Mammon whip*, going on at present over all the earth, on the enslaved backs of men ; I alone enfranchised from it, nothing to do but hear it savagely clashing, breaking God Almighty's silence in that fatal or tragic manner, saying—not to me—"Ye accursed slaves ! " "

Mrs. Carlyle could not write at present with her right hand, owing to the 'neuralgic rheumatism' which had afflicted the arm for some time. But her whole life was a triumph against her infirmities, and she did the best she could with her left hand, and was answered :

'THE GILL, *June 9.*

'Thanks for the struggle you have made to get me a word of authentic tidings sent. I can read perfectly your poor little left-hand lessons, and wonder at the progress you have made. Don't be impious, however. Your poor right hand will be restored to you, please God ; and we may depend upon it, neither the coming nor the going in such cases goes by the rule of caprice. Alas ! What a time we have all got into ! I finished last night the dullest thick book, long-winded, though intelligent, of Lyell ; and the tendency of it, very impotent, was, upon the whole, to prove that we are much the same as the apes ; that Adam was probably no other than a fortunate ourang-outang who succeeded in rising in the world. May the Lord confound all such dreary insolences of loquacious blockheadism, entitling itself Science. Science, as the understanding of things worth knowing, was once a far different matter from this melancholy maundering and idle looking into the unknowable, and apparently the *not* worth knowing.'

On June 14, he wrote from Cummertrees to Emerson<sup>2</sup> : 'Though my hand is shaking (as you sadly notice) I determine to write you a little Note to-day. What a severance there has been these many sad years past !—In the first days of February I ended my weary Book ; a totally worn-out man, got to shore again after far the ugliest sea he had ever swam in. In April or the end of March, when the book was published, I duly handed out a Copy for Concord and you ; it was to be sent by mail ; but, as my Publisher (a *new* Chapman, very unlike the *old*) discloses to me lately an incredible negligence on such points, it is quite possible the

<sup>2</sup> *Correspondence of T. Carlyle and R. W. Emerson*, 1883, Vol. II, pp. 288-93.

dog may *not*, for a long while, have put it in the Post-Office (though he faithfully charged me the postage of it, and was paid), and that the poor waif may never yet have reached you! Patience: it will come soon enough,—there are two thick volumes, and they will stand you a great deal of reading; stiff rather than “light.”

‘ Since February last, I have been sauntering about in Devonshire, in Chelsea, hither, thither; idle as a dry bone, in fact, a creature sinking into deeper and deeper *collapse*, after twelve years of such mulish pulling and pushing; creature now good for nothing seemingly, and much indifferent to being so in permanence, if that be the arrangement come upon by the Powers that made us. Some three or four weeks ago, I came rolling down hither, into this old nook of my Birthland, to see poor old Annandale again with eyes, and the poor remnants of kindred and loved ones still left me there; I was not at first very lucky (lost sleep, &c.); but am now doing better, pretty much got adjusted to my new element, new to me since about six years past,—the longest absence I ever had from it before. My Work was getting desperate at that time; and I silently said to myself, “ We won’t return till *it* is done, or *you* are done, my man! ”

‘ This is my eldest living sister’s house; one of the most rustic Farmhouses in the world, but abounding in all that is needful to me, especially in the truest, *silently*-active affection, the humble generosity of which is itself medicine and balm. The place is airy, on dry knolls waving cheerfully (with such *water* as I never drank elsewhere, except at Malvern), all round me are the Mountains, Cheviot and Galloway (three to fifteen miles off), Cumberland and Yorkshire (say forty and fifty, with the Solway brine and sands intervening). I live in total solitude, sauntering moodily in thin checkered woods, galloping about, once daily, by old lanes and roads, oftenest latterly on the wide expanses of Solway shore (when the tide is *out*!) where I see bright busy Cottages far off, houses over even in Cumberland, and the beautifullest amphitheatre of eternal Hills,—but meet no living creature; and have endless thoughts as loving and as sad and sombre as I like. My youngest Brother<sup>3</sup> (whom on the whole I like best, a rustic man, the express image of my Father in his ways of living and thinking) is within ten miles of me; Brother John ‘ the Doctor ’

<sup>3</sup> James.

has come down to Dumfries to a sister (twelve miles off), and runs over to me by rail now and then in few minutes. I have Books ; but can hardly be troubled with them. Pitiful temporary babble and balderdash, in comparison to what the Silences can say to one. Enough of all that : you perceive me sufficiently at this point of my Pilgrimage, as withdrawn to *Hades* for the time being ; intending a month's walk there, till the muddy semi-solutions settle into sediment according to what laws they have, and there be perhaps a partial restoration of clearness. I have to go deeper into Scotland by and by, perhaps to try *sailing*, which generally agrees with me ; but till the end of September I hope there will be no London farther.

' My poor Wife, who is again poorly since I left (and has had frightful sufferings, last year especially), will probably join me in this region before I leave it.—And see here, This is authentically the way we figure in the eye of the Sun ; and something like what your spectacles, could they reach across the Ocean into these nooks, would teach you of us. There are three Photographs which I reckon fairly *like* ; *these* are properly what I had to send you to-day,—little thinking that so much surplusage would accumulate about them ; to which I now at once put an end. Your friend Conway,<sup>4</sup> who is a boundless admirer of yours, used to come our way regularly now and then ; and we always liked him well. A man of most gentlemanly, ingenious ways ; turn of thought always loyal and manly, though tending to be rather *winged* than solidly ambulatory. He talked of coming to Scotland too ; but it seems uncertain whether we shall meet. He is clearly rather a favourite among the London people,—and tries to explain America to them ; I know not if with any success.—As for me, I have entirely lost count and reckoning of your enormous element, and its enormous affairs and procedures for some time past ; and can only wish (which no man more heartily does) that all may issue in as blessed a way as you hope. Fat Milnes<sup>5</sup> (if you know Milnes and his fat commonplace at all) amused me much by a thing he had heard of yours in some lecture a year or two ago. " This American Eagle is a mighty bird ; but what is he to the American Peacock." At which all the audience had exploded into laughter.'

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Moncure D. Conway.

<sup>5</sup> Richard Monckton Milnes, Lord Houghton.

## V

## REAL ROMANCE

(1865)

IT was probably during this visit to the Gill that Carlyle played the part of match-maker in a real romance of the countryside. Nothing, in fact, but the date is doubtful.

A young man and woman were about to go off together, in defiance of parents on both sides, who for reasons of their own bitterly opposed the match. Then the happy thought suggested itself: Why not refer the dispute to Carlyle, who was then living near? An angry father scoffed. There was no man alive he respected more, or whose judgment he would have followed more blindly. But 'Carlyle would never be bothered with the like of you!' he declared, contemptuously, and perhaps scandalised at the idea of approaching the great man on such a matter.

The young people told a sister of Carlyle; and in due course the arbitrator called at a certain house where the warring factions were assembled to receive him. The parents all 'said their says' at great length and with much emphasis, and were heard so patiently that the young couple lost all hope. It seemed that their cause was doomed. Age would side with age. But when at last the arguments *contra* were all exhausted, Carlyle turned and put 'just a few questions' to the culprits, and then made sure that his advice was still sought.

He delivered judgment without more ado.

'Let them marry,' he declared. 'The sooner the better!'—and so quietly went his ways, 'leaving everybody speechless and perplexed'. The wedding took place at once, for they had agreed to abide by Carlyle's decision, and had no option but to put the best face they could on the matter. And indeed everything turned out very well, and the young couple lived happily together and prospered. But when their children came to years of discretion, they used to wonder why their mother was so enthusiastic an admirer of Carlyle—although she never read a line of any of his books.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Told to D. A. W. more than thirty years ago by one of those directly concerned, who, however, required and received an assurance that when the story was retold nothing more would be disclosed than is here stated. (Comment on D. A. W.'s notes.)

## VI

## DEFINING THE TRINITY

(1865)

IN July, Carlyle spent three or four days with his old friend, good Thomas Spedding, whose brother was Bacon's biographer, and who lived near Keswick. They had been friends for more than twenty-five years, Spedding a 'chief favourite' and 'one of the best men' he knew. In 1839 it was he who had promulgated for Carlyle the prospectus of the London Library.

Letters of 1848 show both Carlyle and Spedding enquiring with interest about the employment of Frenchmen from the National Workshops on the reclamation of waste land in France; and light upon similar proposals in Carlyle's writings might have been found in his correspondence with this friend, a judicious country gentleman; but apparently the papers were all destroyed in the 'eighties.

During the July visit, a divinity student who was a tutor in Spedding's house heard by happy accident a bit of talk which interested him. A farmer's gig was approaching, with three men crowded on one seat in it.

'You've difficulty about the Trinity, Carlyle,' said Spedding. 'There it is for you—three men on one seat.'

'No, not exactly,' was the answer. 'But one man in three gigs, that would be the Trinity!'<sup>1</sup>

Carlyle found Spedding's house the perfection of simplicity and neatness, adorned by 'three beautiful young ladies', his daughters, so that he said his 'three days at Keswick' seemed like a 'small polished flagstone, which I am not sorry to have intercalated in the rough floor of boulders which my sojourn otherwise has been in these parts.'

<sup>1</sup> Told by Rev. J. H. Gillespie of Dundonald, who had it from the tutor quoted, Rev. John Sime of Dundonald, whose colleague and successor Gillespie was.—Note by D. A. W.

## VII

## SMUGGLED TOBACCO

(1865)

CARLYLE spent a while in Scotsbrig before going on to Edinburgh, much relieved in mind by favourable reports of his wife's health.

'I really begin to sleep like a human being!' she wrote on August 2. 'If this would last a week or two, my arm would be cured, and even my hand. Already the pain is so much diminished that I don't *dream* of it in my sleep! and I can do a lot of things with my hand. . . . Oh, the relief of this comparative ease, after five months of constant wearing pain and helplessness!'

A week later she was so much improved that she set to work to remove the inkstains from his writing-table, since he would still have use of it, and it was not going to 'a Literary museum' for hero-worshippers to gaze at! She was even able to write now with the right hand.

Carlyle himself was still much bothered by lack of sleep. 'The truth is,' he declared, writing to his brother Alexander in Canada from Scotsbrig on August 6, 'I am much worn out; also very old; and ought now to know well that the *end* cannot and even should not be far off.'

There was much, indeed, to sadden him in this visit to his native haunts. In Ecclefechan there were hardly three people alive of the friends of his early days, and Craigenputtock—'Ah me, what a place of reminiscences for both of us,'—James had accompanied him—'for me much more! There it lay, the poor old scene; sleepy, overgrown with wood and indolent neglect . . . for the rest, solitude, silence, and innumerable thoughts that no words could really utter.'

He spent a fortnight visiting the godly Thomas Erskine, who was much distressed because Mrs. Carlyle could not join them, at Linlathen, Sir William Stirling at Keir, Lord and Lady Lothian at Newbattle, and various friends in Edinburgh. One August afternoon, he and his brother John were walking together from Edinburgh to Portobello for a swim in the sea, and called *en route* at the house of Dr. James Hutchison Stirling, distinguished in Moral Philosophy, who had met Carlyle many years before.

'Carlyle was very hearty and cheery, and talked a long time to me,' said Mrs. Stirling.<sup>1</sup> Stirling himself, in a letter to George Cupples, declared that 'the great author has decidedly aged; but he still seems pretty strong. He talked very hearty and cheery.'

At a pause in their talk, Dr. John interposed and said to Carlyle: 'It is time for you to have a pipe.' Mrs. Stirling made no remark, and her conversation with Carlyle was resumed. But his brother was insistent. 'You need a smoke,' he said after a while. 'I am sure Mrs. Stirling would have no objection.'

Carlyle, slapping his right knee and bringing his foot down on the floor with emphasis, retorted: 'I won't smoke in Mrs. Stirling's drawing-room.'

'And he didn't,' said the lady proudly, afterwards.<sup>1</sup>

Hearing they were bound for Portobello, Dr. Stirling went with them. Of the talk on the way he remembered only that Carlyle said of Mill: 'Style, oh yes, good style; but he's a weakish creature.' On the return to Edinburgh they had a smoke together, but not in the drawing-room. When they left, Carlyle and his brother neglected to carry their pipe-cases with them, and Dr. Stirling sent his eldest son William round to Dr. Carlyle's house that evening. Carlyle invited the youngster in for a chat, and said to him at parting, 'Tell your father I am very glad I called upon him.'

'These pipe-cases were cheap tins, then common,' Dr. Stirling explained, when referring to this visit, and went on to recall how 'I had shown Dr. Carlyle a shop where good tobacco could be had half-price, because it was smuggled. He laid in a supply, and I believe his brother did the same, for one day when they had been down to the sea for a swim, I met them on their way up, but coming as if from that very shop.' Which, it is to be presumed, had been sanctified by Carlyle's approval—he always abhorred the meanness of taxing the needs of the common people.

<sup>1</sup> *James Hutchison Stirling*, by Amelia H. S., p. 172. Anything here not from this book is from notes by D. A. W. of conversations with Dr. J. H. S. and Mrs. J. H. S., 12.3.1896, 4.1.1897, &c. Mrs. Stirling showed D. A. W. the chair Carlyle sat in, and re-enacted the scene.

## VIII

## MRS. CARLYLE AT FOLKESTONE

(1865)

MEANWHILE, Mrs. Carlyle had gone to Folkestone, to stay for a while with her friend Miss Davenport Bromley—the ‘Flight of Skylarks’, as she called her. The visit did her much good, and, writing to Thomas Woolner, the sculptor, to congratulate him upon the birth of his first child, she was in good spirits:

‘How nice! I have no doubt it is lovely! Such a mother! And such a father! Pray give it a kiss for me, a whole shower of kisses. I hope to see it with my bodily eyes before long. I return to Chelsea on Monday next, till then I am here with Miss Bromley and the pugs.

‘Mr. Carlyle too is longing for home. Can know no rest till he gets there! Poor despised Chelsea has risen in value of late—I should not wonder, so great is his impatience to get back to London(! !), that he will start off without awaiting my return and plump down on those terrified servants all by himself! this week! My arm continues free of pain, and I can use my hand to a certain small extent, for example, I write this note with the lame hand! and since I have been here I have knitted a pair of what shall I say? Garters! Upon my honour.

‘Dear love to the pretty wee wife.’

Her husband’s impatience to return home, although he was admittedly happy and comfortable now with his brother at Scotsbrig, occasioned her some misgivings, and she wrote urging him not to make a hasty journey south. She was anxious that he should break his journey at Alderley Park, where he could be sure of a ‘fine quiet bedroom’ in which to rest, so that when he did arrive home eventually he would not be ‘knocked up’; ‘and then you take it to be “London” that is making you ill!’

On Saturday, August 19, she wrote to her new servant, Jessie Hiddlestone, giving her warning and instructions.

‘Thanks, dear Jessie, for your note, which might have been longer. . . .

‘I continue to like my present quarters; and no wonder; for I have *slept* . . . actually like a human Being; with-



out needing to have recourse to *Lucifers*, or *porter-jelly*, or *essence of beef*, or any other of those melancholy inventions of Sleeplessness! It is rather mortifying, however, that sleeping so well I don't feel the least bit *stronger* for it! Twice that I have tried walking, about as far as twice the length of Cheyne Walk, I have had to get myself brought home ignominiously in a Donkey-Cart! And though I dine *twice* every day . . . I don't think I eat, putting it altogether, as much as would keep . . . *one* rabbit plump and sleek! I miss the oatcakes! and I miss Mrs. Warren's coffee, oh most dreadfully! And I need excessively to have my hair combed!—though the pain is quite gone out of my arm, it is stiffer, I think, than ever! And then the Housemaid is so ugly!—I can't bear her to come within a yard of me! So I take an hour to dress *myself* and look untidy after all.

'Well, one of the two weeks I gave myself is past and the other will soon be over too; and Heaven grant Mr. Carlyle mayn't plump down on you in the meanwhile! . . . But—if he should,—there is one thing that you must attend to, and which you would not think of without being told!—*that cat!*—I wish she were dead! But *I* can't shorten her days! because—you see—my poor dear wee dog<sup>1</sup> liked her! Well, there she is—and as long as she attends Mr. C. at his meals (she doesn't care a snuff of tobacco for him at any other times!) so long will Mr. C. continue to give her bits of meat, and driblets of milk, to the ruination of the carpets and hearthrugs!—I have over and over again pointed out to him the stains she has made—but he won't believe them *her* doing!—And the dining-room carpet was so old and ugly, that it wasn't worth rows with one's Husband about! Now, however, that nice new cloth must be protected against the Cat-abuse. So what I wish is that you would shut up the creature when Mr. C. has breakfast, or dinner, or tea. And if he remarks on her absence, say it was my express desire. He has no idea what a selfish, immoral, improper beast she is, nor what mischief she does to the carpets.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Nero. See *Carlyle to Threescore-and-Ten*, pp. 377 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> This letter was transcribed by D. A. W. from the original at Thornhill, September, 1896. Mrs. Broadfoot (Jessie Hiddlestone) showed it along with the rest she had. It is printed at full length in Reginald Blunt's article, "Mrs. Carlyle and Her Housemaid," *Cornhill Magazine*, October, 1901; reprinted in Reginald Blunt's book, *In Cheyne Walk and Thereabout* (1914).

In fairness to the cat and her progeny, history has to say that when Carlyle was reading in his back garden, a pet cat was often seen sitting in a disinterested way on the grass beside his chair.<sup>3</sup>

## IX

## RESTING AT HOME

(1865)

'CARLYLE,' Ruskin reported to his friend Norton, in a letter of August 15, 'has got through the first calamity of rest, after *Frederick*, among his Scotch hills, and I hope will give us something worthier of him before he dies.'

But to Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, Carlyle declared himself done with the writing of books—'a task to which a man could not be properly encouraged in these times.'<sup>1</sup> By September he and Mrs. Carlyle had met again, in Cheyne Row, Mrs. Carlyle hurrying back from her Folkestone visit to be there to welcome him, and for a while he did little but rest and read, and write occasional letters.

On the first Sunday after his return, September 3, in a letter to Neuberg, who was then in Wales, he enclosed a screed from a stranger, remarking: 'The inclosed I believe to be some *impertinence* in faint ink; I have not read one syllable of it; nor need you, unless quite idle. A man must be a snob and a fool who writes such a hand and with such ink; from Manchester too!'

Manchester may take this kindly, as implying that its normal percentage of snobs was below the average. But the letter is interesting also because of its suggestion between the lines. The enclosure was an 'impertinence', yet he had not read one word of it, so we may assume that his wife had opened and read it and handed it over to him, telling him what it contained.

A few days later Woolner told F. T. Palgrave, in a letter:

'I went to see Carlyle this evening and found him vigor-

<sup>3</sup> See Mrs. Allingham's painting or one of the prints of it.

<sup>1</sup> *Conversations with Carlyle*, by Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, 1892, p. 221.

ously reading at Racine, who seems just now to give him especial admiration.'<sup>2</sup>

Of Racine, too, Carlyle wrote to his brother, the Doctor, in Dumfries:

'I am as *idle* as it is possible to be; merely reading (*Racine* chiefly in the shade of the backyard), musing many sad things. . . . My power of walking too is considerable. . . . Jane is doing well . . . really seems to be *better* than we have seen her for a long time past. We are not without company either, indeed have more than I want; tho' the Town is said to be "empty altogether." Ruskin, Twisleton, Spedding, Forster (the last two just about departing); Froude too is coming soon, etc., etc.: in short, there are *enough*; and seldom comes anyone whom I could prefer to my *Racine* and the fresh air!'

About this time Matthew Arnold was holding up Heine for admiration,<sup>3</sup> which gives a clue to a talk reported by Sir M. E. Grant Duff.<sup>4</sup> Carlyle 'tore up' Matthew Arnold himself, for esteeming Heine the 'continuator' of Goethe, and then he said that Heine was a 'filthy, foetid sausage of spoiled victuals.' There is certainly less of candour than Carlyle required of a critic in Arnold's cool way of ignoring the inconvenient fact that his hero was obscene and impudent and addicted to facile untruth.

Mrs. Carlyle had been so vexed by the death of Nero, and so ashamed of her vexation, that she had 'determined to have no more dog pets'. But now Miss Bromley, who was devoted to pugs, tempted her to change her mind by the offer of a young pug called 'Tiny', and Mrs. Carlyle asked her husband's leave to take it.

'Do as you like,' said he, according to Jessie Hiddlestone, who added: 'That was his usual answer, the only answer I ever heard him give when she asked his leave to do anything.'<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Thomas Woolner, R.A.*, by Amy Woolner, p. 265.

<sup>3</sup> *Essays in Criticism*, First Series, pp. 151-86, 206-13.

<sup>4</sup> *Out of the Past*, by Sir M. E. Grant Duff, I, pp. 94-5. T. C. used similar words about Heine in talking with the musician Joachim, according to a credible witness reporting to D. A. W.

<sup>5</sup> Oral statement to D. A. W. See Chapter V of this book.

## X

## AN ARGUMENT OVER IRELAND

(1865)

THE lifelong friendship of Carlyle and Sir Charles Gavan Duffy was based on the surest of all foundations,—the same sentiments and different opinions.<sup>1</sup> When they were alone together, their commonest topic was Ireland, which was natural then. Duffy delighted to expatiate upon the ill-treatment of the Irish by England, but Carlyle would never allow him to be happy as a mere partisan. He kept steadily before him the other side of the question, and yet, as Duffy relates,<sup>2</sup> ‘in all our intercourse for more than a generation I had only one quarrel with Carlyle, which occurred about this time (1865), and I wish to record it because he behaved magnanimously. Commenting on some transaction of the day, I spoke with indignation of the treatment of Ireland by her stronger sister.’

Carlyle replied to this at some length :

‘If I must say the whole truth, it is my opinion that Ireland has brought all her misfortunes on herself. She committed a great sin in refusing and resisting the Reformation. In England, and especially in Scotland, certain men who had grown altogether intolerant of the condition of the world arose and swore that this thing would not continue though the Earth and the Devil united to uphold it, and their vehement protest was heard by the whole universe, and whatever had been done for human liberty from that time forth, in the English Commonwealth, in the French Revolution, and the like, is the product of this protest. It is a great sin for nations to darken their eyes against light like this, and Ireland, which has persistently done so, is punished accordingly.

‘It is hard to say how far England is blamable for trying by trenchant laws to compel her into the right course, till in later times it was found the attempt was wholly useless, and then properly given up. I find, and anyone

<sup>1</sup> Told D. A. W. by Sir Charles Gavan Duffy in conversation, and noted down in writing by D. A. W. immediately. This applies to everything here quoted from Sir Charles and not in his published writings.

<sup>2</sup> *Conversations with Carlyle*, by Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, pp. 223-30.

may see who looks into the matter a little, that countries have prospered or fallen into helpless ruin in exact proportion as they had helped or resisted this message. The most peaceful, hopeful nations in the world just now are the descendants of the men who said, "Away with all your trash; we will believe in none of it; we scorn your threats of damnation; on the whole we prefer going down to Hell with a true story in our mouths to gaining Heaven by any holy legerdemain." Ireland refused to believe and must take the consequences, one of which, I will venture to point out, is a population preternaturally ignorant and lazy.'

Duffy was very angry, and felt that he had a right to be so.

'The upshot of your discourse,' he cried hotly, 'is that Ireland has been rightly trampled upon and plundered for three centuries, for not believing in the Thirty-Nine Articles; but do you believe in a tittle of them yourself? If you do, what is the meaning of your exhortations to get rid of Hebrew old clothes, and put off Hebrew spectacles?

'If you do not believe them, it seems to me that on your own showing you may be trampled upon and robbed as properly as Ireland for rejecting what you call the manifest truth. Queen Elizabeth or her father, or any of the Englishmen or Scotchmen who rose for the deliverance of the world and so forth, would have made as short work of you as they did of Popish recusants.

'Ireland is ignorant, you say; but do you take the trouble of considering that for three generations to seek education was an offence strictly prohibited and sternly punished by law? Down to the time of the Reform Act, and the coming into power of the Reformers, the only education tendered to the Irish people was mixed with the soot of hypocrisy and profanation. When I was a boy, in search of education, there was not in a whole province, where the successors of these English and Scotch prophets had had their own way, a single school for Catholic boys above the condition of a Poor School. My guardian had to determine whether I should do without education, or seek it in a Protestant school, where I was regarded as an intruder: not an agreeable experiment in the province of Ulster, I can assure you. This is what I for my part owe to those missionaries of light and civilisation. "The

Irish people are lazy," you say, taking no account of the fact that the fruits of their labour are not protected by law, but left a prey to their landlords, who plunder them without shame or mercy. Peasants are not industrious under such conditions, nor would philosophers be so for that matter, I fancy.

'If the people of Ireland found the doctrines of the Reformation incredible three hundred years ago, why were they not as well entitled to reject them then as you are to reject them to-day? In my opinion they were better entitled. A nation which had been the school of the West, a people who had sent missionaries throughout Europe to win barbarous races to Christianity, who interpreted in its obvious sense God's promise to be always with his Church, suddenly heard that a king of unbridled and licentious passions undertook to modify the laws of God for his own convenience, and that his ministers and courtiers were bribed into acquiescence by the plunder of monasteries and churches; what wonder that they declared that they would die rather than be partners in such a transaction? It might be worth remembering that the pretensions of Anne Boleyn's husband to found a new religion, seemed as absurd and profane to those Irishmen as the similar pretensions of Joseph Smith seem to all of us at present.'

This refers to Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormon sect, and first President of their Church, who was murdered in gaol in 1844. The Mormons have now their headquarters at Utah, in the beautiful valley of Salt Lake City, and have bought toleration by conforming to the American women's objections to polygamy.

Gavan Duffy went on:

'After all they had endured, the people of Ireland might compare with any in the world for the only virtues they were permitted to cultivate, piety, chastity, simplicity, hospitality to the stranger, fidelity to friends, and the magnanimity of self-sacrifice for truth and justice. When we were touring in Ireland twenty years ago, with the phenomena under our eyes, you yourself declared that, after a trial of three centuries, there is more vitality in Catholicism than in this saving light (of the English Church) to which the (Irish) people had shut their eyes.'

While Duffy was liberating his soul in this flood of expostulation, Mrs. Carlyle and John Forster were listening in amazement and some apprehension, and seemed to

Duffy to be expecting a catastrophe. Their fears were groundless. Carlyle replied placidly :

‘There is no great life, I apprehend, in either of these systems at present. Men look to something quite different from that for their guidance now.’

Duffy said he ‘could not refrain’ from going on with the subject, declaring : ‘Countries which had refused to relinquish their faith were less prosperous, you insist, than those who placidly followed the royal Reformers in Germany and England. Perhaps they are ; but worldly prosperity is the last test I expect to hear *you* apply to the merits of a people. If this is to be the test, the Jews leave the Reformers a long way in the rear.’

Carlyle retorted : ‘When nations are habitually peaceful and prosperous, it may be inferred that they deal honestly with the rest of mankind, for this is the necessary basis of any prosperity that is not altogether ephemeral ; and as conduct is the fruit of conviction, it may be further inferred with perfect safety that they have had honest teaching, which is the manifest fact in the cases I specified.’

Poor Duffy confessed he was much heated, and ‘took myself off as soon as I could discreetly do so,’ maybe in the company of Forster, in whose house he was to dine that night. Forster tactfully placed him next to Carlyle at table, and doubtless saw without surprise what made Duffy happy, as Duffy relates. ‘I had a pleasant talk (with Carlyle), and neither then, nor at any future time, did he resent my brusque criticism by the slightest sign of displeasure. This is a fact, I think, which a generous reader will recognise to be altogether incompatible with the recent estimate of Carlyle as a man of impatient temper, and arrogant overbearing self-will.’

In one of their Sunday walks to Hyde Park, the newly built Albert Memorial provided a text for a disquisition upon art :

‘England has not been fortunate,’ Carlyle declared, ‘in expressing her ideas in this region more than any other. Someone has compared the Memorial to a wedding-cake with a gilded marionette mounted on it. The effect produced is insignificant or altogether grotesque. The huge edifice called the New Palace of Westminster is not insignificant or grotesque, but it wants the unity of design which is apt to impress one in a work which is a single birth from one competent mind. When Thackeray saw

the river front he declared he saw no reason why it stopped : it ends nowhere, and might just as well have gone on to Chelsea.'

Duffy was anxious to know who was responsible for the disappointing effect of the Albert Memorial, and Carlyle expatiated :

'The person to be contented was the Queen. She lives in such an atmosphere of courtly exaggeration that she has ceased to comprehend the true relation and proportion of things. Hence the tremendous outcry over Prince Albert, who was in no respect a very remarkable man. He had a certain practical German sense in him too, which prevented him from running counter to the feelings of the English people, but that is all. He was very ill-liked among the aristocracy who came into personal relations with him. Queen Victoria has a preternaturally good time of it with the English people, owing a good deal to reaction from the hatred which George IV had excited. Her son, one may fear, may pay the penalty in a stormy and perilous reign. He gives no promise of being a man fit to perform the tremendous task appointed him to do ; and indeed one looks in vain anywhere just now for the man who would lead England back to better ways than she has fallen into in our time.'

The talk rambled on to the relations between Ireland and Scotland. Carlyle used to praise Adamnan's *Life of Columba*—Columkille, the 'Colum of the Churches'—who came from Donegal and turned the native pagans of Scotland to Christianity. His esteem of Adamnan as an honest biographer is now considered correct ; but for about a generation, the 'bookfull blockheads, ignorantly read,' who posed as authorities, scoffed at such an opinion as an eccentricity. Now to Duffy he declared :

'Scotia Major and Scotia Minor owed each other mutual services, running back to the dawn of history. Scotland sent St. Patrick to civilise the western isle, and in good time the western isle sent Columkille and other spiritual descendants of St. Patrick to teach the Scottish Celts their duties towards the Eternal Ruler and His laws.'

'It is disputed,' replied Duffy, 'whether it was Scotland that sent St. Patrick. A friend of mine, Mr. Cashel Hoey, has recently written a paper to demonstrate that St. Patrick was a Frenchman.'

'A Frenchman !' Carlyle exclaimed. 'What strain of



human perversity could induce an Irishman to desire to see it admitted that St. Patrick was a Frenchman?'

Laughing, Duffy suggested that it might have been done to relieve St. Patrick from the reproach of being a Scotchman.

'Well,' said Carlyle, in a bantering tone, 'we may be sure there is never likely to be any such controversy about any other Irish personage, as to whether he was a Scotchman.'

## XI

## QUEEN EMMA

(1865)

ONE day in October, Mrs. Carlyle, accompanied by Geraldine Jewsbury, had the delightful experience of making acquaintance with Royalty.

Lady Franklin—the widow of that "Sir John" that everybody used to sail away to "seek"—had visited, among other out-of-the-way places, the Sandwich Islands, where she was received with every kindness by the ruling house. In return, she entertained Queen Emma and her retinue in her London home, although the English Queen had placed apartments at Clarges' Hotel at the disposal of her dusky majesty. Mrs. Carlyle and Miss Jewsbury accordingly called one day, and were taken by Lady Franklin into the garden, and presented.

The Queen, whom they discovered sitting writing, proved to be 'a charming young woman, in spite of the tinge of black—or rather green. Large black, beautiful eyes, a lovely smile, a musical, true voice, a perfect English accent.'

Mrs. Carlyle was introduced as the wife of the celebrated author, whereat the Queen of the Sandwich Islands electrified her audience by exclaiming: 'I know him, I have read all about him, and read things he has written.'

Mrs. Carlyle was much taken up with this striking evidence of her husband's fame. But she also noted that the funniest part of the interview was 'to hear Geraldine addressing Queen Emma always as "Your Majesty", in a tone as free and easy as one would have adopted to one's cat.'

## XII

## RECOGNITION FROM SCOTLAND

(1865)

IT is the custom in the Scottish Universities to elect periodically a Rector—the more commonly used title, *Lord* Rector, is without justification<sup>1</sup>—whose duties are somewhat vague. He is expected to deliver an inaugural address, and to appoint an Assessor to the University for his term of office. Of later years, the tendency has been to look to the Rector for some concrete evidence of his interest in the University and its students, but in Carlyle's day the Rector's functions were much less defined.

Traditionally, the election is fought on political lines, except in St. Andrews, where men of literary eminence are usually chosen as candidates. In Edinburgh, however, politics dominated the scene, and this autumn Carlyle was invited to stand as candidate against Disraeli. The upshot was a revelation, and gave striking evidence of the immense influence that Carlyle's name wielded, and the manner in which his rugged and heroic figure had fired the imaginations not only of his contemporaries but also of the youth of Scotland.

The Rectorial candidates are not permitted to visit the University during the election struggle, so that Carlyle's participation in this was purely passive. However, early in November came news of victory—the actual figures being, for Carlyle, 657, for Disraeli, 310.

Carlyle was at first inclined to treat it as somewhat of a vexation. But secretly he was pleased, and his wife more so. The only stumbling-block was the address expected of him, and to begin with he refused to consider any such performance.

'My Rectorate,' he wrote to his brother, on November 7, 'it seems, is a thing settled, which by no means oversets my composure with joy! A young Edinburgh man came

<sup>1</sup> Universities (Scotland) Act of 1889, Clause 5 of section dealing with constitution of University Court: "The University Court shall consist of: (1) in the University of St. Andrews, the Rector, etc.; (2) in the University of Glasgow, the Rector, etc.; (3) in the University of Aberdeen, the Rector, etc.; and (4) in the University of Edinburgh, the Rector, etc."

here two weeks ago to remind me that last time, in flatly refusing, I had partly promised for *this* if my work was done. I objected to the "speech". He declared it to be a thing they would dispense with. Well! if so! I concluded; but do not as yet see my way through that latter clause, which is the sore one.'

However, his wife assured Gavan Duffy, when he called, that an address would be forthcoming in good time. Carlyle 'made light of the affair, treating it as a bore, which perhaps, after all, it was better to endure patiently, since certain persons took an interest and had taken trouble in the business. Both he and she have a repressed but very natural and justifiable pride in it nevertheless.'<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile a torrent of letters poured in to Cheyne Row to congratulate Carlyle on his election, and Mrs. Carlyle took occasion to let 'Old Brookes' know that her husband thought his was the best—'a really friendly, graceful letter as a man could wish to receive.'<sup>3</sup>

For Assessor, Carlyle appointed David Laing, Librarian of the Signet Library, who had edited the works of John Knox and the letters of Baillie the Covenanter, and had assisted him in Cromwell researches more than twenty years before.<sup>4</sup>

Mrs. Carlyle gradually overcame her husband's reluctance to appear in public and make a speech to the Edinburgh students, and before long he had been induced to promise. The time for the inauguration would be March or April, when the winter's work was finished, and the summer vacation of those days about to begin.

'My mind more and more inclines to "the first week of April",' he wrote to his brother, the doctor, on November 23, 'for a few good reasons. *First*, the whole matter will be quiet again, fallen dead and silent, nothing to rekindle but my bit of Speech. *Secondly*, I *may* be better (let us hope so, for at present I am oftenest truly helpless, weak as a sparrow, liver and nerves deeply *wrong*,—twelve years of that kind give one a right *thrashing*, especially when seventy is within a fortnight!)—at any rate I shall have better weather; shall *see* the matter more clearly from such a distance, etc., etc. In short, on Saturday or Monday

<sup>2</sup> *Conversations with Carlyle*, by Gavan Duffy, p. 219.

<sup>3</sup> *Mrs. Brookfield and Her Circle*, by C. & F. Brookfield, II, p. 516.

<sup>4</sup> *David Laing, A Memoir*, by Gilbert Goudie, 1913. On 13.11.1865 T. C. sought the advice of John Stuart Blackie as to the Assessorship.

next (if Edinburgh say nothing and you say yes) I believe I shall decide it that way ;—and then kick the affair mainly out of doors for a good while ! ’

## XIII

## GOOD DEEDS AND BAD

(1865)

TOWARDS the end of the year, Mrs. Carlyle was assisted by Gerald Blunt in an act of charity typical of her impulsively generous nature.

Mrs. Cook, the Carlyles’ old laundress, ‘ a very meritorious and very poor and courageous woman, age eighty or more ’, was reduced to seeking shelter in the Workhouse. Mrs. Carlyle and Blunt<sup>1</sup> rescued her, and gave themselves no rest until she was finally settled in comparative comfort—‘ promoted,’ as Carlyle wrote later, ‘ into some . . . small cell or cottage of her own, with liberty to read, to be clean, and to accept a packet of tea, if any friend gave you one, etc., etc. : a *good* little “ triumph ” to my Darling ;—I think perhaps the best she had that spring or winter.’

‘ A fallible being will fail somewhere ’, as a Bishop said once, excusing himself ; and at this same time Mrs. Carlyle was displaying her impulsive nature in a very different direction, in bitter complaints and hasty condemnation of Jessie Hiddlestone, the servant whom she had brought with her from Thornhill, and whom she had at first declared to be a veritable gem.

A few weeks earlier, Jessie had been ‘ so quick, so willing, so intelligent ; never needs to be told a thing twice ; and so warmly human ! My only fear about her is that she will be married-up away from me.’ Now she found her ‘ hard ’, ‘ vain ’, an ‘ untruthful vixen ’. The swift change seems to have been due to the fact that Jessie was anxious to marry, had in fact decided on marrying before entering Mrs. Carlyle’s service, but had not thought it necessary to reveal a purely private matter that, in any case, would not interfere with her service for a full year at least.

Mrs. Carlyle was naturally annoyed at the prospect of soon losing the young woman (Jessie was then about thirty)

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of Gerald Blunt*, by Reginald Blunt, p. 90.

who fitted so well into the Chelsea household, who took upon herself the task of making the porridge and baking the oatcakes that were indispensable, and that Mrs. Warren could never tackle successfully. But she allowed her annoyance to overflow, and made repeated references to the servant's shortcomings in letters about this time, with the capacity for exaggeration and the lack of restraint that make all her correspondences so piquant. As she herself once said, her judgment was apt to be based not upon the facts of a matter but upon the manner in which she had slept the previous night.

No doubt the censure she received coloured Jessie's opinion of her former mistress, but in 1901 she revisited the house in Cheyne Row and gave to the trustees of it the Carlyle letters which she had treasured so long.<sup>2</sup>

Her description of the Carlyles at home during this winter gives a picture of them which, at least, has the merit of earnestness.

## XIV

## JESSIE HIDDLESTONE ON THE CARLYLES

(1865-66)

ACCORDING to Jessie Hiddlestone,<sup>1</sup> 'Mrs. Carlyle did not know in the very least how to manage servants. She was always either out with me and in with Mrs. Warren, the cook, or in with me and out with Mrs. Warren. We were never both in favour at the same time, it was always turn about. I was in and out, and in and out, and in again, often for no reason I could guess.

'Mrs. Warren had been installed as housekeeper the November preceding, and thought herself too good for service, saying she had seen better days, and never served anywhere else.

'We slept in the big attic where *Frederick the Great*

<sup>2</sup> This visit was discussed and planned with D. A. W. in 1896. See *Cornhill Magazine*, October, 1901, pp. 456-7, reprinted in *Cheyne Walk and Thereabout*, by Reginald Blunt.

<sup>1</sup> In conversation with D. A. W., 25.9.1896 and 1.8.1902, in Thornhill. D. A. W. made copious notes, and read them to her next day, for careful correction. What is given here is extracted from these notes.—D. W. M.

had been written. We used to creep down the creaking wooden stairs in the early morning, just like mice, so as not to make a sound to disturb them. Master was easy to get on with, was just like clockwork—anyone could serve him, and he was never exacting. I was there from July, 1865, to August, 1866, and never heard him raise his voice but once, and that was to his brother John.

‘It was in the evening after dinner, and they were all reading, and Dr. Carlyle was fidgety and kept moving about, going out and in. The rustle he made turning the leaves of his newspaper also disturbed master, who at last told him to “make less noise or leave the room”. Mrs. Carlyle said, maybe then, “You hear me breathing.”

‘Breakfast was about nine, but might be a little later if he had slept badly. When he rang his bell instead of coming down, I filled a short clay pipe and took it up to him and struck a match to light it. He smoked that pipe and then got up, but that was a rare thing.

‘He used to open the door of her room as he passed and say in gentle tones, “How are you this morning, dear?” or, “How did you sleep, dear?” When she slept badly, she did make a fuss; but master never did—he was always the same.

‘She suffered (from sleeplessness) more than he did, at least she said more. I have heard them condoling with each other, using language that was very, very strong, and ended in great bursts of laughter at the absurdity.

‘He seemed to believe whatever she said. At Dr. Russell’s once, I remember, the doctor heard her long descriptions of wakefulness, and when she finished he said quietly and gravely, “You must sometimes sleep without being aware of it. You could not have lived if you had slept so little as you say.” Mrs. Carlyle was very much annoyed at this, and often spoke about it afterwards.

‘Coffee and eggs and bacon were Carlyle’s usual breakfast. He needed everything very hot. “Are you sure the water is boiling?” he would ask, and once before I could reply Mrs. Carlyle said, “Put a red-hot cinder in your mouth—that’ll please you!” That was a joke, of course—she never was nasty to him. There was nobody else at all, not even her dearest friend, whom she wasn’t nasty to, or about, sometimes.

‘She spared nobody in her talk. She did not seem to

care much for his relations. She was very jealous if he showed a liking for *anyone*.

'I never saw him once look at a newspaper. Mrs. Carlyle read the daily paper, and I have heard her tell him any news there was. Dr. Russell used to send him the Dumfries paper every week. He never once opened it. He readdressed it to Mrs. Aitken, The Hill, Dumfries—his sister Jean—with two strokes on the address to signify he was well and save writing a letter.

'After breakfast he went out to the garden with a long clay pipe for a smoke. His tobacco was in bars, which I cut up. Both the tobacco and the long pipes which came by the gross were sent to him in presents—far more of both than he could use. He gave away the rest. I never saw him smoke a cigar, and believe that when he went on a visit he was supplied with long clays. But before he went out for the after-breakfast smoke, he had to hear all she had to say, news and everything, and it was sometimes a lot. She had a rare way of telling a story.

'She was very excitable. For little faults at table, she would say a cutting thing to me. When she was in a tantrum, she did not wait for a cause—she lashed out cruelly, but then master always took my part.

'She used to go to the drawing-room after breakfast, and spend most of her time there till one o'clock, when she took a little soup or light luncheon before going out.

'Time after time I have known her ring for me, and when I had climbed from the kitchen to the drawing-room or her bedroom, she had forgotten what she wanted, and the bell was ringing again as I arrived back in the kitchen.

'They had a brougham and a horse, kept at a livery stable. Old Silvester came for orders every morning, but it was nearly always the same. He received two shillings every time. Between one and two she used to drive out to do shopping and pay calls, and take books to and from the London Library. She returned about four for dinner, which they always took together, and then while he was eating—soup, meat and vegetables, and always at the end a glass of port—she told what she had been doing, all she had seen or heard or said. She was very entertaining.

'As soon as the morning smoke was finished, he used to work a big roller about for exercise, and then he sat reading or writing in the study till two, when he went out, sometimes riding, but generally walking, till four. He took

nothing between breakfast and dinner, but sometimes after his walk, as he sat in the garden waiting for dinner, he would smoke a pipe and I would put down for him a little brandy and water.

‘He had a sound sleep after dinner, generally for an hour and a quarter; going straight to his room from the table and lying down on the couch near his bed. I always followed and took his shoes off and spread his cloak and put a coverlet over his legs. The next thing was to close the shutter in such a way as to keep out the noises, and let in fresh air. He never failed to sleep, very soundly, and had to be wakened.

‘This was the hour Miss Jewsbury used to come, almost every day while I was there. She sat on a footstool beside Mrs. Carlyle in the drawing-room and rubbed her ankles and gossiped, and she always went away about the time when master was wakened. At tea Mrs. Carlyle’s talk was the same as at breakfast and dinner—the news,—and she would often quote “Geraldine” and laugh contemptuously at her sayings.

‘After tea he sat and read. If she went out, he sat in the little room off the dining-room, with his elbows on the table, his two hands at each side of his head, fingers generally on the temples to shade his eyes from the light of the candle. He sat steadily reading on and on, without moving. But if she was in, they both remained in the dining-room, she at one end of a little oblong table and he at the other, and two candles on it.

‘The slightest noise disturbed them. None of the clocks in the house was ever allowed to strike.

‘After several hours of reading, he was ready for supper, which was often porridge. Then after ten o’clock, he took the key to let himself in by, and went out for his final walk and smoke. While he was out, I examined the candles. If any of them was less than half finished, I replaced it with one that was half finished or more. This was to make sure he would not sit late when he came in and took up a book, as he used to do. He was likely to sit up many hours if the candles went on burning.

‘If he did not sleep on retiring, he rose and walked about inside the house or in the back garden. He may have gone out occasionally. It was because I was punctual I pleased him. Clean shirts, socks and so on were supplied at fixed hours, which never changed. I attended to all



that, and never a word was said or needed. But I would not have stayed many months with Mrs. Carlyle alone, although I liked her. She was very affectionate, but as changeable as a child. Another difference was this. He never said nasty things about people behind their backs. He said anything of that sort face to face.

'He used to know as if by magic whether people were clever or not. I always knew that a caller pleased him if he remained for long. At any rate, I have often heard him cut short a visit by saying, "And now, if you'll excuse me, as my time is precious," and out they soon went.

'I remember one fine American gentleman, who came to the door repeatedly to enquire his hours of going out in order to watch him. Either he had missed him or wanted to see more, for he came again one forenoon and begged me to ask if he could not come in to "see him for a moment". He never gave me any card.

'Now master had *not* told me that forenoon that he was not to be disturbed, and I thought the stranger a superior man, tall, fine-looking, with a most straightforward, intelligent face. I decided to risk asking master. So in I stepped to the room where he was reading, and stated the case and described the man, and how often he had watched to see him, and so on. "Send him in," said master gently. As I ushered him in, master stood up and greeted him: "Well, sir, here I am. Take a good look at me." Then he pointed to a chair and I shut the door. To my joy, he stayed a long while, two whole hours. They had a good talk, and I saw that master enjoyed his company.

'Besides callers, they sometimes but not often had friends invited to tea: and then I was greatly struck by the way that master harangued occasionally, talking a long time and everybody else quite silent, like a minister preaching to a congregation. Except at a party like that, I never saw Froude in the house as long as mistress lived, and it was only after she died that he came to walk out with master. She did not like him much. I remember she once showed me a letter from him, enclosing his photo and begging her to ask him to one of these evenings. He and his wife came in a carriage and stayed some hours, and departed to go to some "At Home" or other function of that sort. There were others besides them, both ladies and gentlemen, that same evening; and I remember that when they were all gone and master's eyes fell on the clock,

he struck his hands together and said, "Another night lost and nothing done! Jeannie, this must not happen again for a long time."

'It was the same when he had dined out. I have heard him say on returning, "Another night spoiled and no work done!" He dined out seldom, and usually at John Forster's. She had to coax him and settle the thing at least a week in advance, and even then he would seem uncertain about going and ready to change his mind at the last moment and not go; but in general she had promised him, and took him, even although he had said "no" when the thing was first mentioned.

'Mrs. Carlyle was different—dined out very often, nearly every night, returning home at midnight or later. One night, when very late, she said to me, "Well, Jessie, I'm sure you must wish these dinner parties to the devil!" And so I did, but I did not say so. I had to assist her to undress, so I could not go to bed until she came home.

'She used to talk very freely to me about all sorts of things and persons. The time of her severe illness before I came she used to refer to as "when I was dying". One day she showed me a brooch and said, "When I was dying, I sent this to Mrs. Russell as a keepsake. When I didn't die, but got better and went to visit her, she was wearing the brooch, and I took a fancy to it again, and she gave it back to me."

'What surprised me most of all was when she said once, "We are poor, you know." I could see the house was run very economically. The furniture was old-fashioned. She received many presents, too. Twice a week, hampers came from Lord Ashburton's farm with the freshest of butter, four or five new eggs, a little cream, and so on. There were several others eager to send her anything she would take; and she had to be wary in speaking of dresses. If she praised anything in the hearing of any of several wealthy ladies, they would be anxious to contrive how to get her to accept a present of a new dress or something of that sort. Mrs. Carlyle said to me once, "If I did not receive so much, I could not give away so much."

'Once she decided to make her husband a present of a sealskin vest, anonymously. She took an old one as a pattern to the tailor, taking it back when finished, to have it made exactly to her mind. Then she made a parcel of it, wrote his address in a distinguished hand, and sent

it to him by post on his birthday. In due course it was delivered and produced at the breakfast table. She affected ignorance to perfection. They talked of who sent it, guessing one and another. Carlyle examined the handwriting long and carefully. At length he said, "There's a 'T' I ought to know!" In the end he taxed her with it, and she confessed.

'One night I got a great fright—it was the time he used to go out, about eleven o'clock, and he was going up and down the stairs, saying nothing. Supposing something must be far wrong, I ran upstairs in alarm. Mrs. Carlyle was sitting in the drawing-room, and looking out through the open door to the staircase, laughing and laughing and counting master's progress as he went up and down.

'She told me, as well as she could for laughing, that he had wanted to go out, and she objected, as it was a very stormy night. He said he could not sleep without exercise. So she set him to go down to the dining-room and up to the top of the house and back again half a dozen times. She said that would tire him, and she would count. So there he was, going up and down, and she was counting, and he did not go out-of-doors that night, for once.

'They were simply devoted to each other,' was Jessie's conclusion.

## XV

### THREESCORE YEARS AND TEN

(1865)

ON December 4 Carlyle completed the normal span of life, and among friendly greetings on this event came a tribute from 'a certain Cork-cutter at Sunderland', one Thomas Dixon, who later applied to Ruskin for his economic writings and became, in 1867, the addressee of the letters that were published as *Time and Tide*.<sup>1</sup>

Dixon, 'combining with a few other working men', sent a 'fair enough copy' of Bewick's *Birds*, in the hope that Carlyle would accept it in honour of his seventieth birthday.

Apparently he sent as well some more practical gift,

<sup>1</sup> See Ruskin's Collected Works, library edition, XVII, Introduction, pp. lxxviii, &c. See also Book XXVI, Chapter XXIII, *infra*.

addressed to Mrs. Carlyle, for the following day, writing to Mrs. Russell, she remarked :

‘ You may be perplexed by the four pieces of cork. My dear, Mr. Carlyle has admirers of all sorts and trades ; and one of them, a very ardent admirer, is by trade a cork-cutter, and he sent me, as a tribute of admiration, a box containing some dozens of bottle-corks, large and small, and half a dozen pairs of cork soles, to put into my shoes, when shaped with a sharp knife. It is not by many, or any, chances that I have to wet my feet ; so there is small generosity in bestowing two pairs on you or the Doctor.’<sup>2</sup>

Shortly after, Ruskin was studying Bewick on the problem of the pure line, for *Cestus of Aglaia*, and the same ‘ indefatigable Dixon ’ sent Carlyle Bewick’s *Life*, of which he wrote to Ruskin, on the 20th of this month :

‘ Don’t mind the *Bewick*. . . . Peace to Bewick : not a great man at all ; but a very true of his sort, a well completed, and a very *enviable*,—living there in communion with the skies and woods and brooks, not here in ditto with the London Fogs, the roaring witchmongeries and railway yellings and howlings.’

Carlyle’s opinion of Ruskin had improved recently, and he was inclined to regard him with increasing hope and expectation of good work to come. His comments on *Ethics of the Dust* at this time are therefore interesting, and he records a very favourable opinion of this ‘ strange little Christmas book ’ : ‘ It is all about crystallography, and seems to be, or is, geologically well-informed and correct ; but it twists symbolically in the strangest way all its geology into morality, theology, Egyptian mythology, with fiery cuts at political economy. . . . Wonderful to behold ! The book is full of admirable talent, with such a faculty of expression in it, or of picturing out what is meant, as beats all living rivals.’

To Ruskin himself he was even more enthusiastic, declaring, ‘ The *Ethics of the Dust*, which I devoured without pause . . . is a most shining Performance. Not for a long while have I read anything tenth-part so radiant with talent, ingenuity, lambent fire (sheet—and *other* lightnings) of all commendable kinds ! . . . a *poetry* that might fill any Tennyson with despair. You are very dramatic too ; nothing wanting in the stage-directions, in the pretty little indications : a very pretty stage and *dramatis personæ* altogether.’<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Letters and Memorials of J. W. C.*, Vol. III.

<sup>3</sup> *Life of Ruskin*, by Collingwood, Vol. II.

## XVI

## ADVICE TO ALLINGHAM

(1865)

IN December, 1865, Tennyson was exercising himself on behalf of William Allingham, who was hoping for an increase of his pension. Tennyson had spoken to Gladstone, who had promised to approach Lord Russell on the matter, and had also written to Gladstone, informing him of Carlyle's support of the application, and quoting him as saying, of something Allingham had written: 'Your pleasant and excellent historical introduction might, if its modesty would permit, boast itself to be the very best ever written perhaps anywhere for such a purpose. I have read it with real entertainment and instruction on my own behoof, and with real satisfaction on yours—so clear, so brief, definite, graphic; and a fine genially human tone in it.'<sup>1</sup>

Carlyle's support, however, was not without some qualification, for he was anxious to persuade Allingham to set to work upon a history of Ireland, and wrote, on 25.12.1865:

'I will stand to whatever I may have said about the *Ballyshannon Almanac*.

'I thought, and think, the Introduction there showed a very pretty talent . . . and you have the basis of all talent for History.

'I did then expect from you in course of time something quite superior as the History of Ireland; but you pulled up your tether again, took to shifting about again, and I suppose there is nothing done. . . .

'What chance you may have to get this increase of Pension, &c. (in short, this total abolition of "tether"!), I do not know at all: but I must candidly tell you I have great doubts whether it would do you anything but mischief. . . .

'In short, my dear Allingham, if the officials altogether refuse you, I shall be sorry for your disappointed humour, but I shall think the chance of your Irish History . . . is improved for us thereby.'

Allingham deferred to Carlyle's wishes, and devoted much time to preparing materials for a History of Ireland. Indeed in 1870 he published, in *Fraser's Magazine*, a long article

<sup>1</sup> *Alfred Lord Tennyson, a Memoir*, by his Son, Vol. II, p. 31.

which might have been the first part of such a work ; but after much wasted effort he abandoned the idea ultimately, without however permitting himself to bear a grudge against Carlyle for the advice which he had given him so pressingly.

## XVII

## MUSIC AT HOME

(1866)

CARLYLE had never developed a taste for classical music, preferring the simplest of melodies, and Browning heard him<sup>1</sup> abusing the works of Mozart and Beethoven. Mrs. Carlyle played over some of the old Scots tunes to them, to let Browning hear the 'right sort of music.'

Except to her husband and a few intimates, Mrs. Carlyle never played the piano. Latterly, of course, the weakness of her right hand had interfered seriously with her playing, and for long periods stopped it altogether. But one evening in the early spring of 1866, Carlyle had an unexpected treat. He and his wife had gone up to the drawing-room after dinner, both in poor spirits, and he very inclined to fall asleep. She directed him to stretch himself out upon the sofa, but not to sleep. Often before, although not now for a long time, they had spent a quiet hour thus, Carlyle resting, his wife playing to him—'a long series of Scotch tunes which set my mind finely wandering through the realms of memory and romance, and effectually prevented sleep'—which would have been judged injurious immediately after dinner.

Now to his delighted surprise she turned to the piano, opened the Thomson Burns book, and began to play over all his old favourites : 'Banks and Braes', 'Flowers o' the Forest', 'Gilderoy', 'Duncan Gray', 'Cauld Kail', 'Irish Colleen', and many others. To Carlyle this seemed to promise a return to the happy customs of former days, and he expressed a hope to this effect. Mrs. Carlyle answered nothing when she had finished and had shut the piano. She never played again.

<sup>1</sup> On 7.10.1865. See *Ford Madox Brown*, by F. M. Hueffer, p. 139.

## XVIII

## THE LAST VISIT TO FRYSTONE

(1866)

MONDAY, April 2, had been fixed finally as the date for Carlyle's Rectorial Address to Edinburgh University. At first his wife had toyed with the idea of accompanying him, but this was soon seen to be impossible. Her health would not stand the journey, or the excitement inseparable from such an occasion, and it was decided that she should remain at home. A much more fantastic suggestion, that they should remove from London to Edinburgh as a permanency, was inevitably received with no enthusiasm. The Rectorship was purely an honorary office, involving no special duties to the University, so that Carlyle's obligations would be amply fulfilled by appointing the Assessor and delivering his Address. After thirty years of London, with its fuller life and its more congenial society, such a transition would have been intolerable to both. Mrs. Carlyle was not tempted by the notion of a 'villa at Morningside.'

Carlyle had been very modest in his request for tickets of admission to the Address, requiring only twenty for men and six for women—'or,' his wife declared, 'as I suppose they would say in Edinburgh, "ladies".' Two of these *ladies'* tickets she sent to her aunts in Edinburgh, with the urgent plea to return them promptly if they could not be used. The demand was very much greater than Carlyle had anticipated.

It had been arranged that he should stay with Mr. Erskine of Linlathen, where he would be 'most out of the way of railway whistles', and John Tyndall had undertaken to convey him there safely.<sup>1</sup> He was by no means happy about the Address, for it was a very long time since he had attempted to speak in public, and he had never regarded himself as an orator. He had had very little practice, and never took to it with any degree of pleasure; moreover, he held that a speech must necessarily be *spoken*, and not read or repeated from memory, and no matter what preparation went before this was bound to involve a very disturbing element of uncertainty. Speeches written out carefully

<sup>1</sup> See *New Fragments*, by John Tyndall, pp. 357-91, &c.

beforehand, and often—as in the case of many of his predecessors—printed before being actually delivered he regarded as necessarily insincere.

The first stage of the journey north was to be to Frystone, the home of Carlyle's old friend Richard Milnes, Lord Houghton, and accordingly, on the morning of Thursday, March 29, 1866, Tyndall, who was to receive an honorary degree in Edinburgh, drove to Cheyne Row to call for Carlyle. He found him ready at the appointed hour, for neither excitement nor age could disturb the regularity of Carlyle's habits and the strictness of his regard for punctuality. Before they left, Mrs. Carlyle poured a moderate quantity of old brown brandy, such as had been in vogue in Carlyle's youth, and to which he had always remained faithful, into a tumbler, filling it up from a siphon. Carlyle drank it off, and they kissed each other. At the door, as they were leaving, Mrs. Carlyle turned to Tyndall and said, suddenly: 'For God's sake send me one line by telegraph when all is over.' Tyndall promised, and they drove away.

At Frystone a warm welcome greeted Carlyle, towards whom Lord Houghton had never wavered in his affectionate loyalty. But Frystone had its disadvantages. The railways had spread in all directions, and the thunder of passing trains and the shriek of their whistles were torture to a man who had ever been supremely sensitive to even the slightest noise. In addition, dinner was two or three hours beyond Carlyle's usual hour, and it was followed by a vigorous and probably exhausting discussion.

The morning told its tale. Carlyle was 'wild with his sufferings'. He had not slept at all, and when Tyndall went to his bedroom he cried, despairingly: 'I can stay no longer at Frystone. Another such night would kill me!'

Tyndall explained the matter to Houghton and arranged to push on to Edinburgh at once, but an egg-flip in his tea at breakfast restored Carlyle somewhat, and he eventually broke into the discussion of plans, with the exclamation: 'How ungrateful it is on my part, after so much kindness, to quit Frystone in this fashion!'

So Tyndall had a happy inspiration. He suggested a gallop over the countryside for five or six hours, dinner on the lines and at the hour Carlyle was accustomed to, and no discussions thereafter to excite him. Lord Houghton eagerly joined in, and two horses were got ready imme-



diately. The animal Carlyle took was a big bony grey, with a very hard mouth, displaying a disposition to bolt and evidently requiring a strong hand to hold him in. At first Tyndall was apprehensive, but Carlyle swiftly mastered the animal, and they set off at a good pace through lanes, across country, along high roads, for a full five hours, Tyndall paying all the toll-gate charges. When the bespattered horses were at length turned over to the groom, who apparently succeeded commendably in dissembling his feelings, they were in lamentable condition, for the lanes had been mud to the fetlock and the fields slimy and treacherous.

Carlyle retired to his room, put on his slippers and grey dressing-gown, and brought a churchwarden pipe down to the hall for a smoke, taking up his customary position on the carpet by the fire, so as to blow the smoke up the chimney—to the manifest astonishment of the servants.

The long ride had healthily fatigued him, and a stiff tumbler of brandy and soda which Tyndall poured for him gave him a hearty appetite for the simple dinner which, promptly at six o'clock, was set before him.

He was warned against discussions, like the 'traditional warning of the war-horse to be quiet when he hears the bugle sound'; but in the evening an argument arose, and Carlyle seemed ready to throw himself into it as impetuously as he had done the previous night. However, Tyndall put his hand on his arm and said, sternly: 'We must have no more of this!' Whereat Carlyle 'arched his brows good-humouredly, burst into laughter, and ended the discussion.'

His bedroom had been specially prepared, every effort having been made to exclude both light and sound. Tyndall accompanied him upstairs, and refused to acquiesce when Carlyle declared that he had no hope of sleep, and would come to his room at seven in the morning.

'I think you *will* sleep,' Tyndall retorted, 'and if so I will come to *your* room.'

Accordingly, at seven next morning, he went and listened outside Carlyle's door. There was no sound of life or movement within, nor again when he went back at eight, and it was nine before he heard a rustling and opened the door to find Carlyle dressing himself. The change in him was extraordinary. He looked totally different, his face aglow with happiness, 'seraphic', in Tyndall's word. He greeted

him with the cheerful announcement : ' My dear friend, I am a totally new man ; I have slept nine hours without once awaking.'

It was what was most needed to make the Edinburgh visit an unqualified success, and Tyndall was delighted. The chief stumbling-block, insomnia, had been, for the time being, removed, and Tyndall could look forward to the forthcoming ordeal with considerably more equanimity.

## XIX

### EVE OF THE ADDRESS

(1866)

HUXLEY and others joined the party at Frystone, and were to go north with Carlyle and Tyndall to Edinburgh, to receive honorary degrees at a 'capping' preceding the installation. Carlyle himself had of course been offered a doctorate, but had refused, pleading humorously that in heaven there might be some confusion between himself and his brother John, if they both bore the title of 'doctor'. But he was no doubt pleased that he had been, in a way, instrumental in securing the honour for his Edinburgh host, Rev. Thomas Erskine, who, writing shortly after to his friend Thomas Wright Matthews, declared : 'I believe that the fact of Carlyle being my guest whilst he was in Edinburgh for the purpose of being installed Lord Rector of the University was the chief reason of my being honoured with the LL.D. degree. Of course nobody calls me Dr., except for fun.'

The journey to Erskine's passed off as well as might be expected, and many old friends were gathering in Edinburgh to hear Carlyle. On Easter Sunday, April 1, Moncure Conway travelled all night in order to be present, evidence of the great veneration and affection he felt for the old man, for as he says,<sup>1</sup> 'the sleeping car was then unknown, the night was bitter and snowy, and the journey dismal.' He encountered Tyndall in Edinburgh, and the latter told him that so far as he knew they two and Huxley were the only men who had undertaken the hard journey to hear Carlyle speak. In this, of course, he was mistaken, as many

<sup>1</sup> *Autobiography* of Conway, II, p. 86.

Edinburgh graduates had come from far, and there was great competition for tickets to attend.

The venerable Principal David Brewster, fourteen years Carlyle's senior, who had first recognised his literary ability and given him work to do, translating Legendre, &c., nearly half a century before, was apprehensive about the Address, looking forward with fear and trembling to what he felt convinced would be 'a fiasco.'

'Why,' he said to Tyndall, when they met, 'Carlyle has not written a word of the Address; and no Rector of this University ever appeared before his audience without this needful preparation.'

Tyndall's fears, however, were of a very different nature. He had infinite faith in the old man's power to acquit himself with distinction, provided he had 'fair play'—which meant an uninterrupted night's sleep on the eve of the installation, a thing that seemed manifestly improbable.

Mr. Erskine—'Saint Thomas', as Carlyle chaffingly called him—had prepared a room in his Edinburgh house 'near the sky', as noiseless as the town could offer him; the very clocks had been silenced. And so, while Tyndall bore himself like the most loyal and devoted of sons, did everything possible to secure Carlyle's comfort, and showed his thoughtfulness by writing daily to Mrs. Carlyle to report, and to assure her that all would go well, Mr. Erskine, whose beliefs were so far from those of his guest, displayed all the qualities of a gracious and ever considerate host in a manner that went far to ensure complete success.

On Sunday, the night after his arrival, Carlyle and his brother went together to David Masson's house to 'have a quiet smoke and talk over matters.'

'They sat with me an hour or more,' said Masson of this visit.<sup>2</sup> Carlyle was 'as placid and hearty as could be, talking most pleasantly, a little dubious indeed as to how he might get through his Address, but for the rest unperturbed.'

<sup>2</sup> *Carlyle Personally*, by David Masson, p. 27, and in conversation to D. A. W.

## XX

## INSTALLATION ADDRESS

(1866)

‘ON the day of the Address,’ Alexander Smith, then Secretary of the University, and a popular minor poet, reported,<sup>1</sup> ‘the doors of the Music Hall in George Street were besieged long before the hour of opening had arrived; and loitering about there on the outskirts of the crowd, one could not help glancing curiously down Pitt Street, towards the “lang toun of Kirkcaldy,” dimly seen beyond the Forth; for on the sands there in the early years of the century, Edward Irving was accustomed to pace up and down solitarily, and “as if the sands were his own,” people say, who remember when they were boys, seeing the tall, ardent, black-haired, swift-gestured, squinting man often enough. And to Kirkcaldy too came young Carlyle; and the schoolroom in which these men taught, although incorporated in Provost Swan’s manufactory, is yet kept sacred and intact, with but little change these fifty years—an act of hero-worship for which the present and other generations may be thankful. It seems to me that so glancing Fifewards, and thinking of that noble friendship—of the David and Jonathan of so many years ago—was the best preparation for the man I was to see, and the speech I was to hear. David and Jonathan! Jonathan stumbled and fell on the dark hills, not of Gilboa, but of Vanity; and David sang his funeral song—“But for him I had never known what the communion of man with man means. His was the freest, brotherliest, bravest human soul mine ever came in contact with. I call him, on the whole, the best man I have ever, after trial enough, found in this world, or now hope to find.”’

The Music Hall was not a place of entertainment in the modern sense, but then the largest public hall in Edinburgh. In a very few minutes after the doors were opened, Smith recalls, the large hall was crammed.

In the ante-room, Tyndall and others about to receive honorary degrees met Carlyle, dressed ‘with great care and neatness’,<sup>2</sup> and wearing his impressive Rector’s robes.

<sup>1</sup> *Last Leaves* (1869), edited by P. P. Alexander. Smith died in 1867.

<sup>2</sup> *Writings by the Way*, by John Campbell Smith, p. 34.

Tyndall went up to him, and 'earnestly scanning his face', asked: 'How do you feel?' Carlyle returned his gaze, but merely shook his head, without replying.

'Now,' Tyndall went on, 'you have to practise what you have been preaching all your life, and prove yourself a hero.' Carlyle again shook his head, but said nothing.

The party then shortly moved towards the platform, and when they filed up the central passage—the aged Principal, the Rector, members of the Senate, and the others—prolonged and hearty cheering broke out. The Principal of course occupied the chair, with Carlyle on his right, the Provost on his left; and immediately all eyes were fixed upon the man whom everyone had come to hear.

'To all appearance,' Smith says, 'as he sat, time and labour had dealt tenderly with him. His face had not yet lost the country bronze which he brought up with him from Dumfriesshire as a student, fifty-six years ago. His long residence in London had not touched his Annandale look, nor had it—as we soon learned—touched his Annandale accent. His countenance was striking, homely, sincere, truthful—the countenance of a man on whom "the burden of the unintelligible world" had weighed more heavily than most. His hair was yet almost dark; his moustache and short beard were iron-grey. His eyes were wide, melancholy, sorrowful; and seemed as if they had been at times a-weary of the sun. Altogether, in his aspect there was something aboriginal, as of a piece of unhewn granite, which had never been polished to any approved pattern, whose natural and original vitality had never been tampered with. In a word, there seemed no passivity about Mr. Carlyle; he was the diamond, and the world was his pane of glass; he was a graving tool, rather than a thing graven upon—a man to set his mark on the world—a man on whom the world could not set *its* mark. And just as, glancing towards Fife a few minutes before, one could not help thinking of his early connection with Edward Irving, so seeing him sit beside the venerable Principal of the University, one could not help thinking of his earliest connection with literature'—his contributions to Brewster's *Edinburgh Cyclopædia*, &c.

The proceedings began with the conferring of honorary degrees upon Erskine of Linlathen—'a mild, full-eyed, tottering shadow of an old man, one of the Rowite heretics who believed in Edward Irving and the permanence of the age of miracles, but who doubted the perpetuity of hell';

Huxley, 'hissed by some of the less polite but more orthodox students as he came up to receive that honour, looking specially beetle-browed and sulky'; Ramsay; Professor Tyndall, 'wearing the appearance of a clean-made, tall, athletic joiner'; and Dr. Rae, the Arctic explorer—'a burly, grizzly, curly, soldier-like figure'.<sup>3</sup>

Thereafter, a tall young fellow proclaimed with ringing voice the honour that had been conferred upon 'the foremost of living Scotsmen', and 'amid a tempest of cheering and hats enthusiastically waved', Carlyle rose to deliver his Address. Brewster leaned back in his seat as if relieved at this tremendous reception.

It should be noted that a Scottish University is an essentially democratic institution, with the professorial staff representing a small separate aristocracy. The Rector is elected by a free vote of the students, in which the Senate has no say and with which it cannot interfere. He is therefore directly the elected representative of the student body on the councils of the University, expected to take their part and further their interests, and the success or failure of his installation speech is in large measure according as he remembers or forgets this fact. If he addresses himself primarily to the *aristocrats* of the Senate, he will be heard with deference but without enthusiasm. Carlyle seemed instinctively to realise this.

He ignored the 'lay' audience. He began simply with 'Gentlemen,' not 'Ladies and Gentlemen' (a form of opening he had never employed in his lectures), for in those days there were no women students, and he addressed himself directly to the students and their teachers, although there were many ladies, relatives and friends of the staff, in his audience. Probably he used the prefatory word, instead of plunging directly into his speech, in order to emphasise this.

As a preliminary, he disencumbered himself of his rector's robes, then began to speak in a 'low, plaintive voice'. The first words were drowned in the thunderous applause, but, when it had died down, he was heard continuing:

'Your enthusiasm towards me, I must admit, is in itself very beautiful, however undeserved it may be in regard to the object of it. It is a feeling honourable to all men, and one well known to myself when I was in a position analogous to your own, nor is it yet quite gone.'

<sup>3</sup> J. C. Smith's descriptions, in *Writings by the Way*, p. 33.

He went on 'slowly, connectedly, and nobly, raising his left hand at the end of each section or paragraph to stroke the back of his head as he cogitated what he was to say next, the crowd listening as they had never listened to a speaker before, and reverent even in those parts of the hall where he was least audible.'<sup>4</sup>

'And then,' Alexander Smith continues, 'came the Carlylean utterance, with its far-reaching reminiscence and sigh over old graves—father's and mother's, Edward Irving's, John Stirling's, Charles Buller's, and all the noble known in past time—and with its flash of melancholy scorn: "There are now fifty-six years gone, last November, since I first entered your city, a boy of not quite fourteen—fifty-six years ago—to attend classes here, and gain knowledge of all kinds, I knew not what—with feelings of wonder and awe-struck expectation; and now, after a long, long course, this is what we have come to. There is something touching and tragic, and yet at the same time beautiful, to see the third generation, as it were, of my dear old native land, rising up, and saying, "Well, you are not altogether an unworthy labourer in the vineyard. You have toiled through a great variety of fortunes, and have had many judges."

'And thereafter, without any aid of notes, or paper preparation of any kind, in the same wistful, earnest, hesitating voice, and with many a touch of quaint humour by the way, which came in upon his subject like glimpses of pleasant sunshine, the old man talked to his vast audience about the origin and function of universities, the old Greeks and Romans, Oliver Cromwell, John Knox, the excellence of silence as compared with speech, the value of courage and truthfulness, and the supreme importance of taking care of one's health. . . .

'If you wish a purple dye, you must fish up the Murex; if you wish ivory, you must go to the East; so if you desire an address such as Edinburgh listened to the other day, you must go to Chelsea for it. . . .

'That "work is worship"; that the first duty of a man is to find out what he can do best, and when found, "to keep pegging away at it," as old Lincoln phrased it; that on a lie nothing can be built; that this world has been created by Almighty God; that man has a soul which cannot be satisfied with meats or drinks, or fine palaces

<sup>4</sup> *Carlyle Personally*, by David Masson, pp. 25-9.

and millions of money, or stars and ribands—are not these the mustiest of commonplaces, of the utterance of which our very grandmothers might be ashamed? It is true they are most commonplace—to the commonplace; that they have formed the staple of droning sermons which have set the congregation asleep; but just as Wordsworth saw more in a mountain than any other man, so in these ancient saws Mr. Carlyle discovered what no other man in his time has. And then, in combination with this piercing insight, he has, above all things, emphasis. He speaks as one having authority—the authority of a man who has seen with his own eyes, who has gone to the bottom of things and knows. For thirty years this gospel he has preached, scornfully sometimes, fiercely sometimes, to the great scandal of decorous persons not unfrequently; but he has always preached it sincerely and effectively. All this Mr. Carlyle has done; and there was not a single individual, perhaps, in his large audience at Edinburgh the other day, who was not indebted to him for something—on whom he had not exerted some spiritual influence more or less. Hardly one, perhaps—and there were many to whom he has been a sort of Moses leading them across the desert to what land of promise may be in store for them; some to whom he has been a many-counselled, wisely-experienced elder brother; a few to whom he has been monitor and friend. The gratitude I owe to him is, or should be, equal to that of most. He had been to me only a voice, sometimes sad, sometimes wrathful, sometimes scornful; but when I saw him for the first time with the eye of flesh stand up amongst us the other day, and heard him speak kindly, brotherly, affectionate words—his first appearance of that kind, I suppose, since he discoursed of Heroes and Hero Worship to the London people—I am not ashamed to confess that I felt moved towards him, as I do not think, in any possible combination of circumstances, I could have felt moved towards any other living man.'

For an hour and a half Carlyle held his audience spell-bound, and the cheers and laughter that punctuated the early part of the Address very soon gave way to a breathless silence. When he finished, and sat down, the pent-up emotion broke forth; there was, in Conway's words, 'an audible motion, as of breath long held, by all present.' Then the applause began—a roar of acclamation, of exultation, a perfect frenzy of cheering and waving and adulation.



Tyndall, his heart overflowing, rushed out to the nearest telegraph office to send his anxiously expected report to Mrs. Carlyle. 'A perfect triumph.' No more was needed; and in no way was it an exaggeration.

A carriage awaited to take Carlyle to Erskine's house, but he begged to be allowed to walk, not realising in the least what this would involve. So the two old men set off, arm in arm, down the street, accompanied by Moncure Conway, whom Carlyle had asked to look after the newspaper report, and who had waited for him outside the theatre.

Suddenly Carlyle was recognised. In a few moments a procession had been extemporised, and he found himself hemmed in by an excited, cheering multitude of students. 'Nothing,' Tyndall declares, 'in the whole ceremony affected Carlyle so deeply as this display of fervour in the open air.'

Carlyle and Erskine made for the home of Dr. Carlyle, in George Street, followed to the door by the huzzaing crowd. 'I waved my hand prohibitively at the door,' he said of the occasion. 'Perhaps lifted my hat, and they gave but one cheer more—something in the tone of *it* which did for the first time go into my heart. Poor young men, so well affected to the poor old brother or grandfather here, and in such a black whirlpool of a world, all of us.'

The first thing he did was to write a short letter home: 'All is finished, and rather well, infinitely better than I often expected. You never saw such a tempest of enthusiastic excitation as that among the student people. Never in the world was I in such a scene. I took your drop of brandy with me—mixed it in a tumbler for cooling of the tongue. I had privately a kind of *threap*<sup>5</sup> that the brandy should be yours.'

Tyndall and Conway both sent reports by letter as soon as possible to Mrs. Carlyle, knowing how every detail would be precious to her. Conway was given the notes for the Address that had been prepared beforehand, some in Carlyle's writing, but for the most part set down by an amanuensis. They might be of assistance in revising the proofs of the Address; but in point of fact it transpired that they had not been followed to any extent at all, and were therefore worthless as a check. He did the best he could, however, and in sending on his report to the *Pall Mall Gazette* he added a note<sup>6</sup>:

<sup>5</sup> Fixed determination.

<sup>6</sup> *Thomas Carlyle*, by Moncure D. Conway, New York, 1881, pp. 50-1.

' I have never heard a speech of whose more remarkable qualities so few can be conveyed on paper. You will read of "applause" and "laughter", but you will little realise the eloquent blood flaming up the speaker's cheek, the kindling of his eye, or the inexpressible voice and look when the drolleries were coming out. When he spoke of clap-trap books exciting astonishment "in the minds of foolish persons," the evident halting at the word "fools", and the smoothing of his hair, as if he must be decorous, which preceded the "foolish persons," were exceedingly comical. As for the flaming bursts, they took shape in grand tones, whose impression was made deeper, not by raising, but by lowering the voice. Your correspondent here declares that he should hold it worth his coming all the way from London in the rain in the Sunday-night train were it only to have heard Carlyle say, "There is a nobler ambition than the gaining of all California, or the getting of all the suffrages that are on the planet just now." In the first few minutes of the Address there was some hesitation, and much of the shrinking that one might expect in a secluded scholar; but these very soon cleared away, and during the larger part, and to the close of the oration, it was evident that he was receiving a sympathetic influence from his listeners, which he did not fail to return tenfold. The applause became less frequent; the silence became that of a woven spell; and the recitation of the beautiful lines from Goethe at the end was so masterly, so marvellous, that one felt in it that Carlyle's real anathemas against rhetoric were but the expression of his knowledge that there is a rhetoric beyond all other arts.'

' Work, and despair not : *Wir heissen euch hoffen !* '

## XXI

### CHELSEA HEARS THE NEWS

(1866)

' **T**YNDALL'S adorable telegram reached me at Cheyne Row five minutes after six,' Mrs. Carlyle wrote to her husband. She had been suffering a torment of apprehension, fearing all sorts of catastrophes, as that the exertion of the Address would prove too much for Carlyle, and that

he would die under it—torturing herself with ‘the power I possess of fretting and worrying myself into one fever after another, without any cause to speak of.’ She was in a state of quivering anxiety when the news came.

‘Mrs. Warren and Maggie were helping me to dress for Forster’s birthday, when the telegraph boy gave his double-knock. “There it is!” I said. “I am afraid, cousin, it is only the postman,” said Maggie. Jessie rushed up with the telegram. I tore it open and read, “From John Tyndall” (Oh, God bless John Tyndall in this world and the next!) “to Mrs. Carlyle.” “A perfect triumph!” I read it to myself, and then read it aloud to the gaping chorus. And chorus all began to dance and clap their hands. “Eh, Mrs. Carlyle! Eh, hear to that!” cried Jessie. “I told you, ma’am,” cried Mrs. Warren. “I told you how it would be.” “I’m so glad, cousin! You’ll be all right now, cousin,” twittered Maggie, executing a sort of leap-frog round me. And they went on clapping their hands, till there arose among them a sudden cry for brandy! “Get her some brandy!” “Do, ma’am, swallow this spoonful of brandy; just a spoonful!” For, you see, the sudden solution of the nervous tension with which I had been holding in my anxieties for days—nay, weeks past—threw me into as pretty a little fit of hysterics as you ever saw.’

The kindness and spontaneous delight of all their friends touched her very deeply. ‘What pleases me most,’ she wrote of it, ‘is the hearty personal affection towards you that comes out on all hands.’ Indeed Carlyle might inspire dislike in those who had cause to fear his scorn and his plain speaking, but no man was more truly loved by all his friends. Even ‘old Silvester’, who turned ‘white as a sheet, and his lips quivering when he tried to express his gladness over the telegraph. . . . No appearance of envy or grudging in anybody; but one general, loving, heartfelt throwing up of caps with young and old, male and female!’

Mrs. Carlyle went on to Forster’s for dinner, and entered the drawing-room exultant, flourishing the telegram in her hand. Dickens and Wilkie Collins were of the party, and all joined in the heartiest congratulations, and drank Carlyle’s health with great enthusiasm. Forster, in his joy over the success of the Address, even sent out a glass of brandy to Silvester to celebrate the occasion.

It was an evening of supreme happiness for Mrs. Carlyle, and she was radiant. In the course of conversation after

the first exuberation, she 'gave Dickens the subject for a novel, from what she had herself observed at the outside of a house in her street,' declared Forster<sup>1</sup>; 'of which the various incidents were drawn from the condition of its blinds and curtains, the costumes visible at its windows, the cabs at its door, its visitors admitted or rejected, its articles of furniture delivered or carried away; and the subtle serious humour of it all, the truth in trifling bits of character, and the gradual progress into a half-romantic interest, had enchanted the skilled novelist. She was well into the second volume of her small romance before she left, being as far as her observation then had taken her; but in a few days exciting incidents were expected, the denouement could not be far off, and Dickens was to have it when they met again.'

However, the romance was never finished, and she and Dickens never met again.

## XXII

### FESTIVITIES AT EDINBURGH

(1866)

ERSKINE had asked no one to dinner on the evening after the Address, fearing that his guest would not be in a fit state for any further excitement; but since everything had passed off so signally well, and Carlyle seemed none the worse—if anything, in fact, better for the deliverance of his speech—some intimate friends, Lord Neave, Sir John Stirling Maxwell, Dr. John Brown, and other Edinburgh celebrities, were invited to join them. Maxwell tactfully handled the conversation so as to draw out Carlyle, who 'in excellent spirits . . . discoursed in his most genial mood of his old Dumfries-shire remembrances, of the fate of James IV, and other matters of Scottish history, and of the then Emperor Napoleon, of whom, as may be imagined, he was no admirer.'<sup>1</sup>

But presently he escaped to the smoking-room that had been given him for his private use, and carried Moncure Conway with him 'to consult a little about the revision

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Charles Dickens*, by John Forster, III, p. 277.

<sup>1</sup> *Thomas Carlyle*, by R. H. Shepherd (1881), Vol. II, p. 225.

of his Address for the press. . . . He lit his pipe and fell into a long, deep silence. . . . All anxieties seemed far away. I saw his countenance as I had never seen it before—without any trace of spiritual pain. The pathetic expression was overlaid by a sort of quiet gladness; . . . there fell on that great jutting brow and grave face, whose very laughter was often volcanic in its wrath, a sweet childlike look.’<sup>2</sup>

There followed a series of dinners and similar functions, all of which Carlyle sustained with a good grace, although they must have been wearying to one of his years, who found the least departure from his orderly habits and settled routine a serious vexation.

On April 6 there was a large company gathered for dinner at Erskine’s, including Lord Neave, ‘most famous of table-talkers’, Sir David Dundas, once of Palmerston’s ministry, Admiral Ramsay, Dr. John Carlyle, and others. Dundas was a trifle pompous, but amusingly anecdotal, and kept the conversation going at full speed. After the ladies had withdrawn, he gave an epitaph on Pitcairn, the gynæcologist: ‘Prospicite virgines, respicite matronæ, et lugete’, which Neave promptly capped. Then Dundas described old Dr. Parr unable to sleep for worrying over whether the word ‘but’ in a Latin epitaph should be translated *at* or *sed*, for which Neave and Carlyle agreed in thinking him an ass; whereupon Dundas, to retrieve the good Doctor’s reputation, told a story of his having said of someone, probably Dr. Johnson: ‘He may have gone to Abraham’s bosom, but if so he would certainly kick that patriarch’s guts out!’

After discussing Smollett, Neave remarked on the difficulty of knowing what to say about great books that contain impurities, or how to advise young women. Carlyle replied that he thought they should be encouraged to read them but not talk about them.

After they had rejoined the ladies, Carlyle and Neave kept up a ‘grand conversation’. Carlyle found that Dundas was sensitive to Homeric criticism, and rather maliciously insisted that ‘Homer was the name ultimately given to a joint stock company of ballad singers’!<sup>3</sup>

A *Symposium Academicum* was got up in his honour, and held in the Douglas Hotel, St. Andrew’s Square, with

<sup>2</sup> *Thomas Carlyle*, by Moncure D. Conway, p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> *Autobiography*, by Moncure D. Conway, II, p. 94.

Sir David Brewster in the chair. It was a hilarious affair. 'Till then,' reports Tyndall, 'I had thought the dinners of our Royal Society Club in London the most genial in the world; but they could not hold a candle to this Edinburgh Symposium. . . . The figure of Dr. Maclagan,<sup>4</sup> with eyes directed piteously upwards, with body bent, and hands clasped in agony over some excruciating medical absurdity, has left an unfading photograph upon my brain.'

'While dignified and serene,' said David Masson, 'Carlyle was thoroughly sympathetic and convivial. Especially I remember how he relished and applauded the songs of our academic laureate and matchless chief in such things, Professor Douglas Maclagan, and how, before we broke up, he expressly complimented Professor Maclagan on having "contributed so greatly to the hilarity of the evening."'

Dr. Christison found Maclagan 'in great force and very lucky. . . . Blackie was just boisterous enough to carry off his peculiar species of humour. Ramsay, the geologist, sang a capital quiz of his great friend Sir Roderick, for returning to . . . the Russian Empire from the Ural, without finding for him any "coal" in any "hole".' About the guest of the evening the skilful doctor said, after seeing 'a good deal' of him in the course of the week,—'I am sorry' to observe that his 'physical powers' are 'not retained on a level with those of the mind. I found him a simple-hearted, straightforward man, with . . . ingenious felicity and humour in conversation.'

A dinner at Masson's was 'equally jovial,' in Tyndall's words. 'Lord Neave was there—one of the most pleasant personages I had ever met. He was charged with his own bright ditties, which he sang with infective animation. Some time previously John Stuart Mill had written his *Examination of the Philosophy of Sir William Hamilton*, wherein he had reduced the external world to "a series of possibilities of sensation." Lord Neave had thrown this theory into lyric rhyme. The refrain of his song was "Stuart Mill on Mind and Matter." The whole table joined in the refrain, Carlyle, with voice-accompaniment, swaying his knife to and fro, like the baton of a "conductor".'

The song was sung to the tune of 'Roy's Wife of Aldi-

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Douglas Maclagan, author of *Nugæ Canoræ Medicæ, A Medical Professor, &c.*

<sup>5</sup> *Life of Prof. Sir Robert Christison, Bart.*, by his two sons, Vol. II, p. 305.

valloch', and no one enjoyed it more heartily than Carlyle. He surprised Masson by 'doing what I had never heard him do before,—actually joining in with his own voice in the chorus. "Stuart Mill on Mind and Matter, Stuart Mill on Mind and Matter," he chanted laughingly along with Lord Neave every time the chorus came round, beating time in the air emphatically with his fist.'

## I

The self-same tale I've surely heard  
 Employed before, our faith to batter :  
 Has David Hume again appeared,  
 To run amuck at Mind and Matter ?  
 Stuart Mill on Mind and Matter  
 All our old beliefs would scatter,—  
 Those who Hume would now exhume  
 Must mean to end both mind and matter.

*Chorus*

Stuart Mill on Mind and Matter,  
 Stuart Mill on Mind and Matter,  
 Stuart Mill exerts his skill  
 To make an end of Mind and Matter !

## II

Now Mind, now Matter, to destroy,  
 Was oft proposed, at least the latter :  
 But David was the daring boy  
 Who fairly floored both Mind and Matter.  
 David Hume, both Mind and Matter  
 While he lived, would boldly batter :  
 Hume by will bequeathed to Mill  
 His favourite feud with Mind and Matter.

## III

We think we see the Things that be ;  
 But Truth is coy, we can't get at her ;  
 For what we spy is all my eye,  
 And isn't really Mind and Matter.  
 Hume and Mill on Mind and Matter  
 Swear that others merely smatter :  
 Sense reveals that Something feels  
 But tells no tale of Mind and Matter.

## IV

Against a stone you strike your toe ;  
 You feel 'tis sore, it makes a clatter :  
 But what you feel is all you know  
 Of toe, or stone, or Mind, or Matter.  
 Hume and Mill of Mind and Matter  
 Wouldn't leave a rag or tatter.  
 What although we feel the blow ?  
 That doesn't show there's Mind or Matter.

## V

We meet and mix with other men,  
 With women too, who sweetly chatter :  
 But mayn't we here be duped again,  
 And take our thoughts for Mind and Matter ?  
 Sights and Sounds like Mind and Matter,  
 Fairy forms that seem to shatter :  
 Are but gleams in Fancy's dreams  
 Of men and women, Mind and Matter.

## VI

Successive feelings on us seize,  
 As thick as falling hailstones patter ;  
 The Chance of some return of these  
 Is all we mean by Mind and Matter.  
 Those who talk of Mind and Matter  
 Just a senseless jargon patter :  
 What are We, or You, or He ?—  
 Dissolving views, not Mind or Matter.

## VII

We're but a train of visions vain,  
 Of thoughts that cheat, and hopes that flatter :  
 This hour's our own, the past is flown,  
 The rest unknown, like Mind and Matter.  
 Then farewell to Mind and Matter :  
 To the winds at once we scatter  
 Time and Place, and Form and Space,  
 And Heaven and Earth, and Mind and Matter.

## VIII

We banish hence Reid's Common Sense ;  
 We laugh at Dugald Stewart's blatter ;  
 Sir William, too, and Mansel's crew,  
 We've done for you, and Mind and Matter.  
 Speak no more of Mind and Matter :  
 Mill with mud may else bespatter  
 All your schools of silly fools,  
 That dare believe in Mind and Matter.

## IX

But had I skill, like Stuart Mill,  
 His own positions I could shatter ;  
 The weight of Mill I count as Nil—  
 If Mill has neither Mind nor Matter.  
 Mill when minus Mind and Matter  
 Though he makes a kind of clatter,  
 Must himself just mount the shelf,  
 And there be laid with Mind and Matter.



X

I'd push my logic farther still  
 (Though thus I seemed as mad's a hatter) :  
 I'd prove there's no such man as Mill,—  
 If Mill disproves both Mind and Matter.  
 If there's neither Mind nor Matter,  
 Mill's existence, too, we shatter :  
 If you still believe in Mill,  
 Believe as well in Mind or Matter.

*Chorus*

Stuart Mill on Mind and Matter,  
 Stuart Mill on Mind and Matter,  
 Stuart Mill exerts his skill  
 To make an end of Mind and Matter !

XXIII

TYNDALL RETURNING

(1866)

TYNDALL and Huxley had planned a trip to the Highlands, but as heavy snow was reported, making walking in the hills impossible, they abandoned the project and decided to make for home. Before leaving Edinburgh, Tyndall called upon Carlyle, and found him busy correcting the proofs of the Address.

He reports<sup>1</sup> : " ' Now,' he said, ' the tollgates at Frystone are to be settled for.' I made light of them, and urged him to say ' Good-bye.' But he would not. ' The thought of them clings to me like unwashed hands,' " he said, using a peculiarly apposite simile. Tyndall still refusing to make out a bill, ' he put down all the items he remembered, added them together, and said, ' I owe you so much.' Looking over the account I retorted, with mock sternness, ' I beg your pardon, you owe me fourpence-halfpenny more.' He laughed heartily, produced the fourpence-halfpenny, which, with an air of business-like gravity, I pocketed, and bade him ' Good-bye.' "

' Immediately after my arrival in London I called upon Mrs. Carlyle. It was a bright welcome that she gave me. A deep and settled happiness had taken possession of her mind ; though she still could afford a flash of sarcasm for

<sup>1</sup> *New Fragments*, by John Tyndall, pp. 366-7.

one of the Edinburgh audience who had visited her the day before. The glow of pride in her husband was obvious enough. . . . We chatted long over the occurrences in the North, which I thought would give her a new lease of happy life. Referring to her anxiety about the Address, she said she had never entertained the thought of his breaking down. As long as he had life there was no fear of that. But she thought it quite possible that life itself might snap, and that he might fall down dead before the people. It must have been her lithe fingers, and her high-strung nerves, that gave to the pressure of her hand an elastic intensity which I have not noticed elsewhere. Such warmth of pressure had been always mine. As might be surmised, it was not relaxed on this occasion, when . . . I . . . bade her "Good-bye."

Carlyle himself escaped from Edinburgh as soon as might be, and went to seek quiet with his brother and sister Mary at Scotsbrig.

## XXIV

### A VISIT TO MRS. OLIPHANT

(1866)

A DAY or two before Saturday, April 21, Mrs. Carlyle went on a 'little visit' to Mrs. Oliphant, who found her full of the Edinburgh Rectorship, and anxious to tell how she had 'arranged everything for him to the minutest detail.'

A Mr. Stephen, Mathematics Master at Eton, who had a 'pet school of his own—on which he lays out three hundred a year of his own money'—delighted her by praising the Address and telling her, 'We read it aloud to our boys,'—the pupils of his 'pet school', of course!

She had a sharp passage at arms—which may have been prophetic, or may have inspired Carlyle to take, some while later, the line he adopted—with another guest, Hayward, over the 'Jamaica business'—the scandal centring round Governor Eyre and the methods he had adopted to quell a native rising.<sup>1</sup> Hayward 'would have had Eyre cut into small pieces, and eaten raw,' she wrote to her

<sup>1</sup> See Book XXVII, Chapter X, *infra*.

husband. 'He told me *women* might patronise Eyre—that women were naturally cruel, and rather liked to look on while horrors were perpetrated. But no *man* living could stand up for Eyre now! "I hope Mr. Carlyle does," I said. "I haven't had an opportunity of asking him; but I should be surprised and grieved if I found him sentimentalising over a pack of black brutes!" After staring at me a moment: "Mr. Carlyle!" said Hayward. "Oh, yes! Mr. *Carlyle*! One cannot indeed swear what he will *not* say! His great aim and philosophy of life being 'The smallest happiness of the fewest number!'"'

After her two days at Windsor, Mrs. Oliphant 'parted with her at the railway . . . in an agony of apprehension lest something should happen to her on the brief journey, so utterly spent was she, like a dying woman, but always indomitable, suffering no one to accompany her or take care of her. Her . . . face . . . ivory-pale, the hair still dark . . . upon her capacious forehead, . . . the least curve of a smile . . . seem still before me.'<sup>2</sup>

## XXV

## AT SCOTSBRIG

(1866)

THE visit to Scotsbrig was intended to be brief, but a sprained ankle prevented Carlyle from travelling south as soon as he had hoped, and he lingered on for a while longer.

Mrs. Carlyle sent him all the news—about a pirated version of the Address printed and sold in large numbers in London, over which Frederick Chapman was furious, doing his utmost to have it suppressed, and calling upon all the principal booksellers; about the cartoon in *Punch*, which gave her so much delight, and pleased Carlyle as well—'Wisdom and Windbag', on one hand Bright caricatured as 'Windbag', on the other Carlyle, grave and dignified, typifying 'Wisdom', with a quotation from the Address beneath.

As ever, he rode about a good deal, worked on some notes, and wrote letters. On the 18th he sent a testimonial

<sup>2</sup> Article by Mrs. Oliphant in *Macmillan's Magazine*, April, 1881, p. 495.

to James Hutchison Stirling, who was applying for a vacant Professorship of Moral Philosophy in the University of Glasgow, and in the accompanying letter he offered an introduction to Professor Lushington, and advised an approach to David Masson and John Mill. Stirling had recently published an analysis of the philosophy of Sir William Hamilton, which incidentally ran counter to Mill, who had likewise set out to refute Hamilton's theses.

'Did you controvert John Mill or take his side?' Carlyle wrote. 'I fear, the former. John Mill is grown very whimsical latterly (I hear); but you might write to him, and perhaps his generosity would prompt him favourably.'

Mill had written a note of congratulation to Carlyle on the Address, a 'frosty nothingness', and another note of his which Mrs. Carlyle sent on, relating to a request made some time before that Mill would permit a German, Löwe, who had approached Carlyle through Reichenbach, to translate part of Mill's writings, was, in Mrs. Carlyle's words, 'hardly more friendly than silence, but . . . more polite.' Mill's refusal was due to the fact that the work had already been translated into German some time before, by Dr. F. A. Wille.

If now Mill had been as generous as Carlyle hoped, it would have been a pretty thing; but when Stirling applied to him accordingly, he was refused a testimonial on the grounds that Mill did not think Hegel healthy reading for the 'immature minds of university students.' Emerson, however, with whom Stirling had had no previous correspondence, sent a splendid testimonial, along with a letter couched in the most friendly tones. But in spite of all this, and the candidate's own manifest accomplishments, the Glasgow electors preferred a less impressive man, Edward Caird, fifteen years younger and with then no published works to his credit, but with a brother a popular preacher.<sup>1</sup> Stirling later declared that he owed his failure to his refusal to canvass—and all 'goes by canvassing—all in Scotland, I suppose: the whole hive is up when there is question of money to be got.'<sup>2</sup>

The sprained ankle took long to recover—Carlyle wrote from Scotsbrig, on 15.4.1866: 'My ancle is mending (not too fast); today first it was a great triumph to get it

<sup>1</sup> Caird subsequently had a most distinguished career in the Chair of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow.

<sup>2</sup> *James Hutchison Stirling*, by Amelia Hutchison Stirling, pp. 175-8.

squeezed into the shoe again, in which state I can shuffle and walk about with it not amiss; tho' dependent for *exercise* mostly upon a *Pony* here. . . . Aacle over, I should see Adamson once; then let you pack me into the South Western, and despatch me home (Monday morning, say) addressed "Glass with care".'

Probably he was guilty of the fault his wife predicted, impatient of the infirmity, and insisting upon using the ankle before he should, and too strenuously then as well; and it was not until the 18th or thereabouts that he could fix the date for his return for Monday, April 23. He was, indeed, in no particular hurry, still warmed by the success of his Address and the remarkable demonstration of real affection for him in all quarters that it had called forth.

## XXVI

## DEATH OF MRS. CARLYLE

(1866)

ON Saturday, April 21, Mrs. Carlyle wrote again to her husband, to Dumfries, whither he had gone in preparation for his journey home. It seemed useless to write when they were so soon to meet again, but with typical whimsicality she pleaded that 'such a piece of liberality as letting one have letters on Sunday, if called for, should be honoured at least by availing oneself of it!'

One touching item of news referred to a copy, seen in an old-furniture shop window in Richmond, of the portrait of Frederick lent to Carlyle—'not bad; coarsely painted, but the likeness well preserved. Would you like to have it? I will, if so, make you a present of it, being to be had "very equal"'. I "descended from the carriage," and asked, "What was that?" (meaning what price was it). The broker told me impressively, "That, ma'am, is Peter the Great." "Indeed! And what is the price?" "Seven-and-sixpence." I offered five shillings on the spot, but he would only come down to six shillings. I will go back for it if you like, and can find a place for it on my wall.'

She drove out earlier than usual to lunch with the Forsters, and was expecting a number of guests to tea—no less than eleven, in fact. They included Principal and Mrs. Tulloch and Froude, the Spottiswoodes, Mrs. Oliphant, and other friends, with Geraldine Jewsbury to help entertain. Froude and Tulloch had conceived a mutual liking, and were anxious to meet when occasion presented itself, with the Tullochs visiting London.

She had been disappointed in the morning as there had been no letter from her husband, but she expected to find it awaiting her when she came home, and Forster and his wife remarked how well and cheery she seemed, and in high spirits,—‘Carlyle coming home the day after to-morrow,’ she told them. She left about three, bidding Silvester make for the Park as usual. There she took a walk of a hundred yards or so, with the dog Tiny running about. At the south side of the Serpentine Bridge she re-entered the carriage, and Silvester drove north. At ‘a quiet place near Victoria Gate’ she put Tiny out for a run, and so they came round to the east end of the Park. A passing brougham knocked the dog over, injuring its paw, and it lay upon its back, screaming. Mrs. Carlyle pulled the check string, and almost before the carriage stopped she was out, hurrying to the dog.

The lady whose brougham had caused the accident also descended, and several other ladies who were walking near by gathered round Tiny, who, however, was more frightened than hurt. Mrs. Carlyle lifted him into the carriage, and ordered Silvester to drive on. As he did so, he heard Tiny squeal a little, as if she had been exploring for possible injuries.

At Hyde Park Corner he turned and went again along the Serpentine, and round about the Park, repassing the scene of the accident. But presently he became alarmed at receiving no further orders, and noticed that she was sitting motionless, both hands idly on her lap, the one palm up, the other turned down. This immobility was so unusual that he drove towards the gate and begged a passing lady to look inside the carriage. One look was sufficient, and a man whom she called to assist gave the same report. It was a little after four. Some time shortly after she had rescued Tiny she must have lain back exhausted in her seat, and died. Perhaps the excitement and exertion had proved too much for a weak heart and

a constitution for so long undermined by acute nervous disorders.

Silvester drove as he was advised direct to St. George's Hospital, which faced the Park, and when Mrs. Carlyle had been taken in went home with the empty brougham and the news in great distress. Recognising Gerald Blunt on the way, he stopped and told him everything, then while Blunt went to Onslow Gardens to inform the Froudes, who belonged to his congregation, he continued to Cheyne Row, where Jessie was on the look out.

The expected letter from Carlyle was on the hall table. Jessie took it with her, thinking that it would give his address, and returned with Silvester to the hospital. On the way, they met Blunt, to whom Jessie gave the letter, and also called at Forster's to leave the news.

At the hospital their mistress lay on a bed as if asleep. She was dressed just as she had been when she left the house, and they had to look close to be sure that she was dead—she was so little changed.<sup>1</sup> Tiny was at her feet and recognised them. Except to take the body from the carriage to the bed, and then to place it in a coffin for removal to the house that night, no hand was laid upon her in the hospital.<sup>2</sup> Forster, as a lunacy commissioner, carrying weight in official circles, hastened to obtain from her doctor the medical certificate needful to avert an inquest, and thus avoided a great deal of pain that the publicity and formality of such an event would inevitably have caused.

Froude called for Geraldine Jewsbury on his way to the hospital, and found her dressing for the tea-party. When he had taken her home afterwards, he went on to Cheyne Row, where Forster and Blunt had preceded him.

About midnight, the body was brought home, and Mrs. Warren, Jessie, and Miss Jewsbury were waiting to receive her. They laid her upon her bed, and burned the two penitential candles she had kept so long. Telegrams were

<sup>1</sup> The mention of a great change in the face by Froude is palpable fiction. He goes far beyond Miss Jewsbury's fanciful statement, and is discredited not only by the silence of Blunt, who saw her at the same time and knew her better, and by the general probabilities arising from the facts beyond dispute, but also by the clear and positive statement made to D. A. W. by Jessie, Mrs. Broadfoot, in Thornhill.—Note by D. A. W. on his collected material.—D. W. M.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Truth About Carlyle*, by D. A. Wilson, pp. 55-8. Mrs. Broadfoot corroborated the statements of the Resident Medical Officer at St. George's Hospital.

sent to Dr. Carlyle in Edinburgh, and to Dr. John Brown, and Dr. Carlyle sent on the news the same night to his brother-in-law, Aitken, in Dumfries, with whom Carlyle was staying in readiness for his journey south on Monday.

## XXVII

## BEREAVEMENT

(1866)

CARLYLE was stunned.

He had been 'quietly . . . hitching about' alone in the fields near his sister's house in Dumfries when his wife died; and after nine o'clock was sitting, thinking of the Monday's journey home, when the news came by telegraph.

He lay awake all night.

'They took me out next day to wander . . . in the green sunny Sabbath fields,' he wrote, 'and ever and anon there rose from my sick heart the ejaculation, "My poor little woman!" but no full gust of tears came to my relief, nor has yet come; will it ever? A stony "Woe's me, woe's me!" sometimes with infinite tenderness, and pity not for myself, is my habitual mood hitherto. . . .

'Sixteen hours *after* the telegram,—(Sunday about 2 p.m.) there came to me a *Letter* from her, written on Saturday before going out; the cheeriest and merriest of all her several prior ones.'

To William Dods, of Haddington, he wrote from The Hill, on April 22: 'There has come to me, last night, the saddest of all earthly messages. My dear and noble wife suddenly reft away from me. . . . Long ago it was her covenant with me, that she was to lie beside her Father in Haddington Churchyard; and within these two years she repeatedly made me promise, that I should write at once to you,—who would immediately, for her sake, undertake all the arrangements. . . .

'For Thursday name *you* the hour, and invite what few friends my Beloved may still have in her native place,—not forgetting Mr. H. M. Davidson of Linton. Time is done. Adieu, and pity me.'

His brother John accompanied him upon the dreary



journey back to London, and Forster was there to meet them and drive them home. He and Dr. John went into a ground-floor room, according to Jessie, who silently followed Carlyle upstairs, without offering him the 'gush of sympathy' which he had avoided from the distressed Mrs. Warren. He went into the bedroom and closed the door behind him. He remained alone with the corpse at least half an hour, after which he came downstairs, seeming very quiet.

'Never, for a thousand years,' he wrote afterwards, 'should I forget that arrival here of ours,—my first *un-*welcomed by her; *she* lay in her coffin, lovely in death; I kissed her cold brow . . . pale Death and things not mine or *ours* had possession of our poor dwelling. Next day wander over the fatal localities in Hyde Park; Forster and Brother John settling, apart from me, everything for the morrow.'

There was, however, no 'wandering' visible to Silvester, who told Jessie how he had driven him to the place, and then had to show and explain every detail of what had happened that day. Count Reichenbach enquired of Jessie whether he might keep Tiny, and when she asked Carlyle he said: 'I never wish to set eyes upon it again. Let him have it.'

As soon as possible Tyndall came to the house.

'The door was opened by Carlyle's old servant, Mrs. Warren,' he tells us, 'who informed me that her master was in the garden. I joined him there, and we immediately went upstairs together. It would be idle, perhaps sacrilegious on my part, to attempt any repetition of his language. In words, the flow of which might be compared to a molten torrent, he referred to the early days of his wife and himself—to their struggles against poverty and obstruction; to her valiant encouragement in hours of depression; to their life on the moors, in Edinburgh, and in London—how lovingly and loyally she had made of herself a soft cushion to protect him from the rude collisions of the world. The late Mr. Venables, whose judgment on such a point may be trusted, often spoke to me of Carlyle's extraordinary power of conversation. In his noon of life it was without a parallel. And now, with the flood-gates of grief fully opened, that power rose to a height which it had probably never attained before. Three or four times during the narrative he utterly broke down. I

could see the approach of the crisis, and prepare for it. After thus giving way, a few sympathetic words would cause him rapidly to pull himself together, and resume the flow of his discourse. I subsequently tried to write down what he said, but I will not try to reproduce it here. While he thus spoke to me, all that remained of his wife lay silent in an adjoining room.<sup>1</sup>

On Wednesday they started for Haddington. 'John and Forster kindly did not speak to me,' he remembered, adding: 'Good Twistleton too was in the train without consulting me. I looked out upon the Spring fields, the everlasting Skies, in silence; and had for most part a more endurable day,—till Haddington, where Dods etc. were waiting with hospitalities, with etc. etc. which almost drove me openly wild.'

The coffin had preceded him to the house of William Dods, banker and seedsman, who had once been Carlyle's rival for the hand of Jane Welsh.

'I went out to walk in the moonlit silent streets,' he continued; '*not* suffered to go alone: I looked up at the windows of the old Room where I had first seen her,—1821 on a Summer evening after Sunset,—five and forty years ago. Edward Irving had brought me out, walking, to Haddington; *she* the first thing I had to see there. The beautifullest young creature I had ever beheld; sparkling with grace and talent, though sunk in sorrow (for loss of her Father), and speaking little. I noticed her once looking at me,—Oh, Heaven, to think of that now!

'The Dodses (excellent people in their honest homely way) had great pity for me, patience with me; I retired to my room, slept none all night.' They reported that after they had retired he slipped out to the garden, and was walking there long after midnight.

Thursday, April 26, was Haddington race-day, but the town was quiet, the crowds all gone to the races. Only a small party attended the funeral—'twelve old friends, and two *volunteer*, besides us three'. She was buried, in conformity with an old custom in Scotland,<sup>2</sup> in her father's grave in the nave of the old ruined Abbey Kirk—'now being saved from further decay.'

<sup>1</sup> *New Fragments*, by John Tyndall, pp. 368–9.

<sup>2</sup> Sir John Sinclair's *Statistical Account*, 1791–9, IV, p. 531, and XIII, p. 632; James Murray's *Life in Scotland*, pp. 140–1; Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, IX, p. 293 (letter of 4.2.1829).

'I laid her head in the grave of her Father (according to covenant of forty years back); and all was ended.'

Later an inscription was placed upon the tombstone, with the words :

Here likewise now rests

JANE WELSH CARLYLE

SPOUSE OF THOMAS CARLYLE, CHELSEA, LONDON.

SHE WAS BORN AT HADDINGTON, 14<sup>th</sup> JULY, 1801, ONLY DAUGHTER OF THE ABOVE JOHN WELSH, AND OF GRACE WELSH, CAPELGILL, DUMFRIESSHIRE, HIS WIFE. IN HER BRIGHT EXISTENCE SHE HAD MORE SORROWS THAN ARE COMMON; BUT ALSO A SOFT INVINCIBILITY, A CLEARNESS OF DISCERNMENT, AND A NOBLE LOYALTY OF HEART, WHICH ARE RARE. FOR FORTY YEARS SHE WAS THE TRUE AND EVER-LOVING HELPMATE OF HER HUSBAND, AND BY ACT AND WORD UNWEARIEDLY FORWARDED HIM, AS NONE ELSE COULD, IN ALL OF WORTHY THAT HE DID OR ATTEMPTED. SHE DIED AT LONDON, 21<sup>st</sup> APRIL, 1866; SUDDENLY SNATCHED AWAY FROM HIM, AND THE LIGHT OF HIS LIFE, AS IF GONE OUT.



BOOK XXVII  
REMINISCENCES  
1866—1868



## ANE END TO ANE AULD SANG

(1866)

IT was the opinion of Moncure Conway<sup>1</sup> that Carlyle was never the same again after the death of his wife. He was past seventy, and did not expect to survive her long, supposing every year would be his last.<sup>2</sup> Froude apparently formed a definite conception of him, at variance with that of people who knew him far more intimately, as an oddity, in a sense half mad, and brutal to his wife ; and he accepted, without any attempt at corroboration, whatever Geraldine Jewsbury told him of the relations of the Carlyles. Miss Jewsbury, who claimed to be Mrs. Carlyle's best friend, was neurotic and unstable, 'never happy,' in Mrs. Carlyle's opinion, 'unless she has a *grande passion* on hand, and as unmarried men take fright at her impulsive and demonstrative ways, her *grandes passions* for these thirty years have all been expended on married men'; which has led not unnaturally to the assumption that what she said of Carlyle could be traced to pique at his persistence in treating her with punctilious kindness as a friend of his wife.

It is idle to doubt Froude's good faith ; but his inaccuracy as historian and biographer is well known, and he certainly suppressed much that would have militated against the conception of Carlyle which he held and which he set himself to convey. The sad fact remains that he gave to the world a picture of Carlyle which could not easily be effaced, and when, in a flood of horror and indignation, the full texts of letters and journals were issued, and Froude's treatment of the materials exposed, so that an entirely different version of Carlyle's character was displayed, the mischief had been

<sup>1</sup> *Thomas Carlyle*, by Moncure D. Conway, pp. 131-2.

<sup>2</sup> Told by various nephews and nieces.

done.<sup>3</sup> The world is ever ready to believe the worst, and tear its heroes limb from limb. It is a crime in the eyes of common men to be different, a much greater crime to be superior; and every opportunity of hurling an idol from its pedestal will find those ready who will seize upon it with avidity. In any case, muck-raking has always been a lucrative branch of the profession of letters.

Mrs. Carlyle was herself a highly neurotic woman, fanciful, impetuous, and fond of dramatising herself. Her letters, brilliant and charming as they so often are, are full of complaints about her ill-health and her sufferings, running often to several pages. For a time she was undoubtedly on the verge of madness, forcing Carlyle to promise that whatever happened he would not let her be taken away. 'Only the husband who has gone through the ordeal of living for years with a wife emotionally deranged, but intellectually clear, as Mrs. Carlyle was, can realise what Carlyle must have endured. . . . His sympathetic gentleness and forbearance are beyond all praise.'

In the end, she happily got over her bitter jealousy of Lady Ashburton, whose veneration of Carlyle was almost that of a daughter. Lady Ashburton's husband and the second Lady Ashburton both read Carlyle's letters to her, and found them 'friendly, intimate letters, expressive of admiration, but in no way transgressing proper bounds.'

Froude's misconception was catastrophic in another way, for through it the beauty of Carlyle's relations with his wife, and their deep-rooted affection and mutual esteem, were long lost sight of. They were both fond of anecdotes, which Mrs. Carlyle could relate with astonishing brilliance, and one of Carlyle's was of the North Country farmer whose wife, after a tiff, left him and went back to her parents. She soon tired of the separation and returned home, where she greeted her husband with: 'I'se back again, thou see!' To which he replied: 'Back again? I never kenned thou was away!' It is pathetic that anyone should have seen in this evidence that Mrs. Carlyle herself once left her hus-

<sup>3</sup> See *The Nemesis of Froude*, by Sir James Crichton-Browne and Alexander Carlyle; Crichton-Browne's article *Froude and Carlyle: the Imputation Medically Considered*, in the *British Medical Journal* for June 27, 1903; and *The Truth About Carlyle*, by David Alec Wilson. Frank Harris's nonsense, his walk in Hyde Park with Carlyle, when Carlyle is alleged to have blurted out a terrible secret to a youth he hardly knew, is palpable fiction. Carlyle was then physically incapable of taking a walk in Hyde Park.



band, and on repenting and returning was greeted with the same grim indifference.

In Tennyson's opinion, 'Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle on the whole enjoyed life together, else they would not have chaffed one another so heartily,'<sup>4</sup>—an opinion shared by 'Dicky' Milnes, Lord Houghton, who wrote to his wife (on 26.6.1883): 'Mr. G. Trevelyan . . . quite took my view about Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle—that they were about as happy together as married people of strong characters and temperaments usually are.'

In point of fact, the habit of 'chaffing' so commonly indulged in in Scotland, and particularly in Galloway and the south-west generally, must sometimes puzzle an Englishman. The 'flyting' of the early Scots poets is something more than mere vituperation: it has a national significance, characteristic of a national predilection. It is a form of humour which is not readily appreciated by strangers, and which in no way implies real antagonism, or interferes with the friendship that may seem so well hidden beneath stinging words: and it remains essentially a native form of humour. Both Carlyle and his wife had it in a marked degree. It is not easy to pin down, to reproduce in concrete instances, but what might seem to English ears plain bad manners or bad temper might quite well be intended, and received, as nothing more than good-natured chaff.

It is reported that once the faithful Allingham, for whom Carlyle had a deep and abiding affection, and who was the least prone to argument of all his friends, preferring silence to an expression of his disagreement, raised his voice in mild protest against a more than usually forceful asseveration of the 'Sage'; whereupon Carlyle, fixing him with a grim eye, exclaimed: 'Eh, William Allingham, you're just about the most disputatious man I ever met. Eh, man, when you're in one of your humours you'd just dispute about anything!' The company was 'bewildered'; but Allingham 'took the remark in very good part', and in fact often told the story of it to his friends; perhaps, being Irish, he could appreciate more readily the humour intended—a compliment expressed as a rebuke. It is claimed that a Scotsman's highest praise of a thing is that it is 'not too bad', or that it 'might be waur (worse)'. Carlyle was more profligate of encomiums; but there is a substratum of truth in it; and assuredly Froude, who set

<sup>4</sup> *Alfred Lord Tennyson, A Memoir, by his Son, Vol. II, p. 233.*

himself the task of interpreting Carlyle's character, was the least capable of all their circle of appreciating the most salient aspect of Carlyle's humour.

The truest and deepest sympathy existed between Carlyle and his wife, and if at times he appeared neglectful of her, that was no more than was inevitable in a man so entirely absorbed by his labours.

Sir James Crichton-Browne, discussing her with Mrs. Forster, suggested that she must have had 'a rough time'. The good lady's reply was unequivocal and emphatic: 'Don't you believe all that! She was rather an actress, and liked to pose as a martyr, talking of her sufferings and getting sympathy. I assure you *he* was the great sufferer.'<sup>5</sup>

Browning was convinced that in the matter of domestic unhappiness, such as there was, Mrs. Carlyle was the more responsible of the two. He 'always thought her a hard and unlovable woman, and . . . little liking was lost between them. He told a comical story of how he had once, unintentionally but rather stupidly, annoyed her. She had asked him, as he was standing by her tea-table, to put the kettle back on the fire. He took it out of her hands, but, preoccupied by the conversation he was carrying on, deposited it on the hearthrug. It was some time before he could be made to see that this was wrong; and he believed Mrs. Carlyle never ceased to think that he had a mischievous motive in doing it.'<sup>6</sup>

But whatever the faults on either side, it was all over now; and the best tribute to her memory lies in the fact, not only of Carlyle's terrible grief, but of the utter disorganisation of his life, and his feeling that now everything that made life endurable was gone—sufficient, surely, to have silenced all foolish chatter and ill-natured gossip, and more particularly the obscene inventions of a later time.

<sup>5</sup> "Carlyle and Froude," by Sir James Crichton-Browne, *Nineteenth Century and After*, July, 1903.

<sup>6</sup> *Life and Letters of Robert Browning*, by Mrs. Sutherland Orr, p. 366 and note.

## II

## CONDOLENCES

(1866)

THE first thought in the minds of Carlyle's friends was not so much of sorrow at the death of his wife, although that was deep enough, as of apprehension at the probable effect of his loss upon him. His brother John accompanied him back to the silent Chelsea house, and remained with him for some time, perhaps hoping that as he himself had now no ties they might live together in mutual consolation. Maggie Welsh, 'one of the Liverpool cousins, used to the house here', came to look after them both.

'The Doctor,' Carlyle wrote to Mrs. Aitken, on May 14, 'seems well and comfortable; is prompt as possible to do any service to me; but there is not now much in his power. Maggie Welsh and he keep the House from being so ghastly to me, as in its emptiness it would otherwise be. Maggie is an active, orderly, polite creature, with a certain truth of sympathy in my sorrow,—and will go at any moment, or stay longer, as I like.'

When Mrs. Oliphant called, she found Carlyle sitting 'alone . . . forlorn in the middle of her (Mrs. Carlyle's) room.'<sup>1</sup> They talked of Mrs. Carlyle's stories, how Irving had put the little girl on a table when teaching her, and how she had been carried in a clothes'-basket to the 'Dancing-School Ball'—'Perhaps the loveliest little fairy that was on this earth at the time,' said 'her old husband' then, in 'deep, broken-hearted voice', with a strange 'laugh of emotion' that seemed pathetic. He spoke of 'the little vermin of a dog' which caused the shock that killed her; and as Mrs. Oliphant heard him and recalled the recent image of her friend,—'her palest, worn yet resolute face, her feeble, nervous frame,'—she realised at once the truth.—'His old wife was still so fair to him, even across the straits of death,—had returned indeed into everlasting youth.'

He could not bring himself to forget that his wife's death had been caused, perhaps, by her solicitude for the little dog, and her precipitancy in dashing out to rescue it.

'Was not her own death,' he wrote to his sister, Mrs.

<sup>1</sup> *Autobiography and Letters of Mrs. Oliphant*, p. 75, corrected by her article in *Macmillan's Magazine*, April, 1881, pp. 492-3.

Aitken, on April 28, 'caused by the hurt toe of a miserable little scraping of a *dog* hardly even hers? That wretched animalcule has done *me* more mischief than all the men and animals that have ever lived in my time! We must take these paltrinesses to us, also; they are part of our bitter cup. . . . But *she* died happy and victorious, in the way she had always wished to do.—No more; this is my first writing, and my hand, is as you see.

'In a few days I will write again. Day by day I am getting bits of order introduced into this great overturn of my past existence; that is the only thing *she* would have wished as a consolation to me. I saw her dead face twice. . . . I will walk all day; my sleep only half come back: well otherwise. God bless you, dear Sister, and reward your sympathy and kindness for me.'

A letter from Erskine of Linlathen was one of the few which he read through, and answered. On 28.6.1866 he told Mrs. Austin, in a letter: 'Thanks for your kind enquiry after me; I feel it all the kinder knowing too well that you are yourself so weary and heavy-laden. . . . How I understand what you say about letters of condolence! I have burnt some scores of them, unread except the first line and the signature.'<sup>2</sup>

To Erskine he wrote, on May 1: 'Your little word of sympathy went to my heart, as few of the many others could do. . . . Hitherto I write to nobody, see nobody but my brother and Maggie Welsh of Auchtertool. Indeed I find it is best when I do not even speak to anybody. The stroke that has fallen on me is immeasurable, and has shattered in pieces my whole existence, which now suddenly lies in ruins round me. In her name I must try to repair it, rebuild it into something of order for the few years or days that may remain to me. . . . That should be my way of honouring her. . . . God bless you, dear Mr. Erskine. You will not forget me, Mrs. Stirling<sup>3</sup> and you; nor will I either of you.'

Dickens, writing to John Forster, declared that Carlyle had been in his mind since ever he heard the news, and, referring to their pleasant dinner in Forster's house on 2nd April, he added: 'How often have I thought of the unfinished novel! No one now to finish it. None of the writing women come near her at all.'<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Three Generations of Englishwomen*, Mrs. Ross, II, p. 159.

<sup>3</sup> Erskine's sister. <sup>4</sup> *Charles Dickens*, by John Forster, III, p. 276.

Moncure Conway brought to Carlyle a charming and delightful letter he had received from Mrs. Carlyle in reply to his telling her of the triumph of the Rectorial Address. 'Carlyle was distressed that she had not received his last letter,' he reports.<sup>5</sup> 'It was written at Scotsbrig—the letter which of all he had ever written he would have wished her to read. . . . He found it on her table, there placed while she lay dead in the hospital. He told me again of Edward Irving's introducing him to her and of their marriage. . . .

'He then took me out into the garden, where we smoked together. He said "he must either get at some work, or die. Only work could make life sufferable for him now." We then took a long walk in Hyde Park, where he asked me about American affairs, and talked in his usual way about universal suffrage. He said he did not see why votes should be given in America to all the white sots in creation and not to the negro, but it was a *reductio ad absurdum*.

'Carlyle expressed his desire that I should come as freely as usual to see him, and I did so.'

Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, who was in Ireland when news of Mrs. Carlyle's death came, found Carlyle, when he was able to call upon him, 'composed, and at times even cheerful. His fresh mourning, a deep folding collar, and other puritanical abundance of snowy linen crowned with a head of silver grey, became him, and gave a stranger the impression of a noble and venerable old man. . . . In earlier times no one was readier to indulge in badinage and banter; a smile was much more familiar to his face than a frown or a cloud.'<sup>6</sup>

Ruskin had called at Cheyne Row with a bouquet for Mrs. Carlyle on the day of her death, and had been shocked to receive the news. He was, however, on his way to the Continent with Sir Walter and Lady Trevelyan and others, and therefore did not see Carlyle for a time. He wrote, instead, 'after the proper interval', and received a reply<sup>7</sup>:

'Your kind words from Dijon were welcome to me: thanks. . . . You are yourself very unhappy, as I too well discern; heavy-laden, obstructed and dispirited; but you have a great work still ahead; and will gradually have to gird yourself up against the *heat of the day*, which is coming on for you,—as the night too is coming. . . . Come and

<sup>5</sup> *Autobiography of Moncure D. Conway*, II, pp. 98-9.

<sup>6</sup> *Conversations with Carlyle*, by Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, p. 231.

<sup>7</sup> *Life and Work of John Ruskin*, by W. G. Collingwood, Vol. II, pp. 61-2.

see me when you get home ; come often and see me, and speak *more* frankly to me.'

Ruskin obeyed this request, and 'it was pleasant to see how serene and beaming was his face, so worn and troubled in those days, when he entered that room at Chelsea. "Mr. Carlyle," he said one evening, "how few people I know who really can sit down at their own little table and pour out their cup of tea from their own little teapot, and there think and say what is to them true without regard to the world's clamour!" Carlyle said: "That used to be the characteristic of the English people; wherever you had an Englishman you had a man with an opinion of his own; but one doesn't find it so now." Alas, the tea was poured out tremulously.'<sup>5</sup>

Dr. John Brown of Edinburgh being in London, enjoying a mild lionising perhaps for his story of *Rab and His Friends*, came to Cheyne Row on May 28, and reported to his sister. His wife had died in 1864, which may have helped him to deeper understanding and sympathy. 'I called with Mr. Syme on Carlyle, and had a long, very interesting, and at last quite cheery talk from him. Poor fellow, it is most affecting to see his face when at rest, such utter sadness.'<sup>8</sup>

Emerson wrote characteristically, with the deepest sympathy:

'The stroke long threatened has fallen at last, in the mildest form to its victim, and relieved to you by long and repeated reprieves. I must think her fortunate also in her gentle departure, as she had been in her serene and honoured career. . . . I could heartily wish to see you for an hour in these lonely days. Your friends, I know, will approach you as tenderly as friends can; and I can believe that labor—all whose precious secrets you know—will prove a consoler,—though it cannot quite avail, for she was the rest that rewarded labor. It is good that you are strong, and built for endurance. . . . I rejoice that she stayed to enjoy the knowledge of your good day at Edinburgh, which is a leaf we would not spare from your book of life. . . . Long years you must still achieve, and, I hope, neither grief nor weariness will let you "join the dim choir of the bards that have been," until you have written the book I wish and wait for,—the sincerest confessions of your best hours.'<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Letters of Dr. John Brown*, edited by his son and D. W. Forrest, p. 187.

<sup>9</sup> *Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson*, II, pp. 298-300.

But to what work now could Carlyle turn for relief? He had believed that his job was done with *Friedrich*, that nothing more of any magnitude need be contemplated. Yet only in work of some kind could there be any assuagement of his grief.

## III

## MISS JEWSBURY'S MYTHS

(1866)

**I**MMEDIATELY after Mrs. Carlyle's death, Geraldine Jewsbury wrote down all that she could remember of her talk, or all she fancied she remembered, a series of biographical anecdotes which she headed: 'In Memoriam Jane Welsh Carlyle'. Froude mistakenly believed this was prepared at Carlyle's express wish, but it is now known to have been inspired by Lady Lothian. Geraldine sent it, very wisely, to Carlyle first of all, for his scrutiny, and on May 22 he replied.

'Dear Geraldine,—Few or none of these Narratives are correct in all the details; some of them, in almost all the details, are *incorrect*. I have not *read* carefully beyond a certain point which is marked in the margin.<sup>1</sup> Your *recognition* of the *character* is generally true and faithful; little of *portraiture* in it that satisfied me. On the whole, all tends to the *mythical*; it is very strange how much of mythical there already here is!—

'As Lady Lothian set you on writing it, it seems hard that she should not see what you have written; but I wish you to take *her word of honour* that none else shall; and my earnest request to you is that, directly *from* her Ladyship, you will bring the Book to me, and consign it to my keeping.

'No need that an idle-gazing world should know my lost Darling's History, or mine;—nor will they ever, they may depend upon it! One fit service, and one only, *they* can do to Her or Me: cease speaking of us, through all Eternity, as soon as they conveniently can.'

She sent it to him on the 25th with what he thought a 'kind and respectful letter': '“Narratives long ago,

<sup>1</sup> The marked passage was omitted by Froude.

on our first acquaintance," &c. &c. and fermenting and agglomerating in my mind ever since ! ' Such prompt compliance with his wishes mollified him, and her work was spared immediate destruction.

' Geraldine returns me this little Book of Myths,' he wrote in his journal, ' unshown to anybody, and to be my own henceforth. I do not yet burn it . . . in fact, there is a certain mythical truth, in all or most parts of the poor scribble, and it may *wait* its doom, or execution.'

However, it may have been this ' little book of myths ' which turned his thoughts towards the consolation he sought. Being idle, and remembering perhaps the comfort he had found in writing reminiscences of his father long ago, he reconsidered the ' mythical truth ' as Geraldine had told it, and found occupation in correcting it, jotting down whatever occurred to him ; it was only later that the thought of a book, *Letters and Memorials*, came to him. Meantime, what he wrote was for his own solace only, held sacrosanct and never for a moment considered in the light of possible readers other than himself.

There is a peculiar point of similarity between Miss Jewsbury and Froude. Carlyle comments (May 29, 1866) : ' Geraldine's *Craigenputtock* stories are more mythical than any of the rest. Each consists of two or three, in confused exaggerated state, rolled with new confusion into one, and given wholly to *her*, when perhaps they were mainly some servant's in whom she was concerned.' The traditional method, in fact, by which myths are built up, and to using which, as has been demonstrated, Froude too was prone.

As Carlyle wrote, his grief found frequent expression, and along with it a poignant regret, such as everyone must know when it is too late, of opportunities missed of giving his wife pleasure or paying her attentions. When he writes of the terrible headaches which attacked her at times, he cries : ' Oh, what of pain, *pain*, my poor Jeannie had to bear in this thorny pilgrimage of life ; the unwitnessed Heroine, or witnessed only by me,—who never till now *see* it *wholly* ! '

' Ay de mi ! ' he wrote, quoting a favourite phrase of hers, which she had even had engraved upon her gold thimble.<sup>2</sup> At Craigenputtock they had read Spanish together, and much enjoyed *Don Quixote* and other books. In *Gil Blas* (Book IX, Chapter 5) there is a dainty drop of

<sup>2</sup> *Letters of C. E. Norton*, I, p. 491, footnote.



old Spanish song,—‘*Ay de mi! Un ano felice . . .*’ &c., which may be translated :

Wae’s me! A year’s pleasure goes by like a breeze :  
A moment of pain seems eternal disease !

“ ‘Wae’ is the Scotch adjective too,” he remarks, adding : “ ‘Wae, wae!’—there is no word in English that will express what is my habitual mood in these months,—the mood of one looking at death, and resting upon it in thought, as the weary eye may rest upon the eternal darkness, which is the background of the stars.

‘I am sad and sombre,’ he wrote to his sister Jean (on 23.6.1866), ‘my heart wholly *wae, wae*; and occupied with one object, which none can be expected to share with me,—nor could in the least *help* me if they did. But I keep very quiet; fully *best*, I think, when nobody is speaking to me, and I walk silent with my thoughts and memories for company. Plenty of people *come*, too many rather; I do not, except it be to leave a card for mere civility, go to almost any one.’

He continued at the Reminiscences, writing almost daily, with pathetic interjections here and there: ‘Surely this is very idle work,—the rather if it is all to be burnt! But nothing else yields me any solace at all, in these days. I will continue it to-morrow.’ He recorded also his feelings on the Rectorial Address, and on his success in general—feelings in the light of tragedy.

‘The “recent return of popularity greater than ever,” which I hear of, seems due alone to that late Edinburgh affair; especially to the Edinburgh *Address*; and affords new proof of the singularly dark and feeble condition of “Public Judgment” at this time. No idea, or shadow of an idea, is in that Address, but what had been set forth by me tens of times before: and the poor gaping sea of Prurient Blockheadism receives it as a kind of inspired revelation,—and runs to buy my Books (it is said) now when I have got quite done with their buying or refusing to buy. If they would give me £10,000 a year, and bray unanimously their *hosannahs* heaven-high for the rest of my life,—who *now* would there be to get the smallest joy or profit from it? To *me* I feel as if it would be a silent sorrow rather, and would bring me painful retrospections, nothing else.—

‘On the whole, I feel often, as if poor England had

really done its very kindest to me, after all. Friends not a few . . . I have had all along ; and these have all . . . been decorously silent : enemies I cannot strictly find that I have had any (only blind blockheads running athwart me on their own errand) ; and as for the speaking and criticising multitude, who regulate the paying ditto . . . I have arrived at a point of indifferency towards all that, which is really very desirable to a human soul that will do well ; and . . . in regard to money . . . it is essentially the same . . . Which, under both heads, means *victory*, and the very highest kind of "success" ! Thanks to poor anarchic crippled and bewildered England, then ; hasn't it done its very *best* for me, under disguised forms ; and seeming occasionally to do its *worst* ?

There was no work, yet, that he could turn to that would bring the solace he required—nothing, at the moment, but this 'Sitting by her Grave'—'like a kind of religious course of worship to me.'

'Sunday, 10th June ; weather fiercely hot ; health suffering visibly last week ; *must* take new courses : form new resolutely definite *plans*,—which requires (or *would* require) a great deal more of strength and calmness than I have at present ! Quiet I am, avoiding almost everybody, and far preferring *silence* to most words I can hear : but clear of vision, *calm* of judgment I am far from being !—Ought I to *quit* this "work" here, which I feel to be very idleness ? . . . Oh, my Loved one . . . dost *thou*, as if it were *thou*, bid me Rise, go hence, and work at something ? Patience ; yet a little, yet a little !—At least I will quit these vague provinces ; and try to write something more specifically *historical*, on this Paper of *her* providing !'

## IV

## THE REMINISCENCES

(1866)

CONWAY found Carlyle immensely changed. With 'the light of his life as if gone out,' now 'he seemed to grope.<sup>1</sup> His eye saw but one thing clearly—the grave. . . . Once he spoke to me of the "strange experiences"

<sup>1</sup> *Thomas Carlyle*, by Moncure D. Conway, pp. 131-2.

he had undergone within the few months following his wife's death. For a year, or nearly two, it was as if the world had become to him a realm of shadows. The fineness of both his memory and his judgment seemed blunted, and many of the persons he had known, and used to describe with interest and discrimination, were, if mentioned, brushed away like flies—mere annoyance to a heart trying to find silence and repose in the grave where it lay with its lost treasure. After a few years, he rallied from this condition somewhat, but he was never quite the same man again, unless in exceptional hours. . . . He increasingly disliked to be in large companies, and if any argument was begun with him was apt to end it abruptly with a *concessum sit*.'

'So singular was his condition at this time,' Froude wrote in his Preface to the *Reminiscences*, referring to this period immediately after Mrs. Carlyle's death, 'that he was afterwards unconscious what he had done; and when ten years later I found the Irving MS. and asked him about it, he did not know to what I was alluding'—which might have seemed sufficient reason for withholding publication of the *Reminiscences*, especially in view of Carlyle's own written injunction (omitted by Froude) against unduly hasty publication: for that injunction was given when Carlyle was fully aware of what he had written. Charles Eliot Norton points out, moreover, that in the first five pages of the printed text edited by Froude, there were 'more than a hundred and thirty corrections to be made, of words, punctuation, capitals, quotation marks, and such like; and these pages were not exceptional.'

However, the writing of the *Reminiscences* served its present purpose, providing Carlyle with the labour required to ease his grief, something akin at least to the type of work which he had done all his life, and still more important, an outlet for his grief, for the sorrow and regret of a man of noble character that now all chance was lost of letting his Loved One know how deep was his gratitude to her and how complete his sympathy and feeling for her in all her sufferings.

On July 28 he wrote, coming to the end of this resource:

'The paper of this poor Notebook of hers is done<sup>2</sup>; all I had to say, too (although there lie such volumes yet unsaid), seems to be almost done: and I must sorrowfully

<sup>2</sup> Every space of the Notebook had been filled. This last is on a separate sheet, attached to the last page.

end it, and seek for something else. Very sorrowfully still ; for it has been my sacred shrine, and *religious* city of refuge from the *bitterness* of these sorrows, during all the doleful weeks that are past since I took it up : a kind of *devotional* thing (as I once already said), which *softens* all grief into tenderness and infinite pity and repentant love ; one's whole sad *life* drowned as if in *tears* for one, and all the wrath and scorn and other grim elements silently melted away. And now, am I to *leave* it ; to take farewell of *Her* a second time ? Right silent and serene is *She*, my lost Darling yonder, as I often think in my gloom ; no sorrow more for *Her*,—nor will there long be for me. . . .

' Everything admonishes me to *end* here my poor scrawlings and weak reminiscences of days that are no more.

' I still mainly mean to *burn* this Book before my own departure ; but feel that I shall always have a kind of grudge to do it, and an indolent excuse, " Not *yet* ; wait, any day that can be done ! "—and that it is possible the thing *may* be left behind me, legible to interested survivors, —*friends* only, I will hope, and with *worthy* curiosity, not *unworthy* !

' In which event, I solemnly forbid them, each and all, to *publish* this Bit of Writing *as it stands here* ; and warn them that *without fit editing* no *part* of it should be printed (nor so far as I can order, *shall* ever be) ;—and that the "*fit editing* " of perhaps nine-tenths of it will, after I am gone, have become *impossible*.'

Of most men it may be said, as of Richelieu, that to read their memoirs is the way to mistake them ; they confess like criminals a fraction of the truth, and what they tell is shaped to screen and not to reveal. The key to Carlyle's *Reminiscences* is that his language was that of pious self-humiliation, written in oblivion of readers, solely as an outlet for his grief and his last great expression of devotion for the wife whom he had loved and, so far as he knew how, cherished throughout the adventurous and often stormy passage of their married life. There was nothing therefore to hide, for he was of all men the least guilty of self-deception, and tortured himself, as men will, with opportunities lost for rendering his wife's lot pleasanter and happier. To him his work had always been the supremely important fact of life ; now it seemed to him, bewildered and grief-stricken, that it had led him to neglect his wife.

When it occurred to him that others might read what

he was writing, he penned his admonition against publishing, meaning probably to revise the *Reminiscences* later on and, if it seemed best, to prepare them himself for publication. Quite plainly he regarded it as impossible and unthinkable that any but himself could do this needful editing; but when once these papers had been laid aside they passed from his mind entirely, and nothing more was done to them then. Long afterwards, in 1875, he gave them to the niece who was his housekeeper, to burn or keep at her discretion. She lent the *Reminiscences* to Froude, who 'just flattered me into it,' she said to her sisters,<sup>3</sup> blaming herself later, but no one else would blame her for what it was so natural to do. Her uncle neither knew nor cared what she lent to Froude, whom she allowed to take whatever he wanted, knowing the implicit trust which Carlyle placed in him.

Nothing is more out of keeping with Carlyle's character than the solicitude described by Froude for what was to be written or said about him. Remorse and penitence were fiction, yet Froude believed in them, lacking understanding. What he read as remorse was the cry of despair that now all was over, and never again could Carlyle assure his wife of the depth of his feeling for her, or atone for those little inevitable acts of seeming neglect whose memory plagues all who have loved and lost.

## V

## CALLERS

(1866)

THE American, John R. Thompson, who had been sent to England in 1864 by the Confederate Government, and had called on Carlyle with a letter from Stonewall Jackson—whom Carlyle did not know personally, but whose recommendation he was ready to accept, so that Thompson

<sup>3</sup> The Misses Carlyle Aitken of Dumfries, who told D. A. W. The fact that these papers were lent by her has since been established beyond dispute. See *The Nemesis of Froude*, by Sir J. Crichton-Browne and Alexander Carlyle, pp. 127-57, and in particular the foot of p. 138, and pp. 142 and 147. The Cozens Hardy whose opinion prevailed was in 1916 (when D. A. W.'s notes were made) Master of the Rolls.—D. W. M.

was soon on a friendly footing—reported in his diary, on June 1 :

‘Met in Hyde Park Carlyle, the first time since the death of his wife. He walked as far as Brompton Road. He talked with all his peculiar brilliancy ; said the failure of Overend & Co. was the legitimate result of the limited liability companies, that commercial men of England were mashing their faces into pancakes against the adamant of things. Speaking of Jefferson Davis, he declared that, looking at the war from first to last, Davis seemed to him one of the manliest actors in it, and whatever the jury might say on his trial, the grand jury of mankind had already declared him not guilty.

‘Mr. Carlyle said he had read Moncure Conway’s paper in Fraser’s Magazine on Cincinnati, and shut up the book thanking God that he was four thousand miles from it all.’

It is pleasant to add that Jefferson Davis, the President of the Confederacy, whose capture in 1865 was the end of the war in America, was soon released on bail and never brought to trial. Some letters passed between him and Carlyle during and maybe after the war, but seem never to have been read except by the addresses ; and living quietly on his estate in Mississippi, Davis more than completed his fourscore years.

‘Concerning great men,’ Thompson continues, describing his talk with Carlyle, ‘he said, “Never was there a greater mistake than that of believing great emergencies produced great men ; they were not always to be had when wanted.”

‘Referring to George III, he highly extolled his courage in the Lord George Gordon riots, and praised the library he left to the British Museum as on the whole the best he had seen, telling me he had written his *French Revolution* from the authorities he found there.’

Shortly after this walk in Hyde Park, Monckton Milnes, Lord Houghton, called upon Carlyle, who was then writing the *Reminiscences* of his wife. He reported to Lady Houghton : ‘Carlyle let me in yesterday (9.6.1866), and talked about her (Mrs. Carlyle) for near an hour. How I wish I could have taken down what he said word for word !—

“She wrapped me round like a cloak, to keep all the hard and cold world off me.”

“When I came home, sick with mankind, there she was on the sofa, always with a cheerful story of something or

somebody, and I never knew that she, poor darling! had been fighting with bitter pains all day."

"To think that little dog should have been the instrument to take the light of life away from me."

"What would it be for me now to have the fame of Trismegistus, without her to be glad of it?"

"She had never a mean thought or word from the day I first saw her looking like a flower out of the window of her mother's old brick house, my Jeannie, my queen;" and so on.<sup>1</sup>

In the same month, David Masson also called, upon his yearly visit from Edinburgh, and as he afterwards said<sup>2</sup>: 'Finding him unoccupied, I reminded him of many anecdotes he had told me of people he had known, especially common people in Dumfriesshire. I warmly urged him to write down his Reminiscences. He only said, "Yes, yes," and changed the subject. This was at the very time when he was writing about his wife.

'Both then and afterwards, he always spoke to me freely about her, but never in a tone of "remorse." His reticence as to what he was doing at the time was very like him.'

## VI

### A VISIT FROM ALLINGHAM

(1866)

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM had 'got ten days' leave', and came to London on July 25. On Monday, July 30, after calling on Rossetti, he 'turned the corner into Cheyne Row, and seeing light in No. 5 went in. Upstairs room, Carlyle, Miss Welsh ("Maggie"), Miss Jewsbury, and an old bald man, to whom I was introduced by C. "This is David Laing, well known to all enquirers into Scottish affairs."'

Laing, Librarian to the Signet Library, Edinburgh, and the Assessor appointed by Carlyle as Rector of Edinburgh University, was deeply interested in John Knox, having devoted many years to preparing material and writing on

<sup>1</sup> *Richard Monckton Milnes, Lord Houghton*, by T. Wemyss Reid, II, p. 149.

<sup>2</sup> Orally, to D. A. W., on 30.10.1896 and again on 27.3.1910.

his life and works, and he and Carlyle were now 'looking over some engraved portraits', possibly Volume VI of Knight's *Gallery of Portraits* in which the Somerville portrait of Knox appeared in 1837. Allingham goes on<sup>1</sup>: 'Carlyle singled out one, asking pointedly, "Whose face do you call this?" Laing suggested that it might be So-and-so, or So-and-so, Carlyle saying, "No, no, no!" and at last, "I perceive that you can throw no light on the matter."' "

It seemed to be Carlyle's conviction that this portrait, showing a 'shrewd humorous face with bald forehead and scanty beard', must be the only authentic portrait of John Knox—a conviction which led to further discussion at a later date.

The visitor omits further details of the old men's talk, and was probably not allowed to heed it, Miss Jewsbury pressing him to call upon her, and Miss Welsh 'ever cheerful and chirpy.'

When Laing departed, the other two men adjourned to the back garden and sat there, 'under the summer stars', Carlyle smoking and listening while Allingham told of his adventures one Sunday a fortnight before in the New Forest. He and Tennyson were 'swimming' through tall bracken there, when Tennyson paused, in the midst of it, turned and said solemnly, 'I believe *this* place is quite full of vipers.' Shortly after he stopped again to remark, 'I am told that a viper-bite may make a woman silly for life, or deprive a man of his virility.' Carlyle remarked that 'adders' were properly 'nadders', and quoted, 'The poison of asps is under their tongues.'

They talked thereafter of Dublin Petrie, and Allingham's paper on him in *Frazer*, of which Carlyle approved: 'Perhaps *over-appreciative*—but that is as it should be in such a case.' Carlyle described his last visit to Dublin and his intercourse with Petrie there in July, 1849. His notes<sup>2</sup> made then suggest what he may have said: at a dinner party at the house of Dr. Stokes (Thursday, 5.7.1849), 'Petrie, a Painter of Landscapes, notable antiquarian, enthusiastic for Brian Boru and all that province of affairs; an excellent, simple, affectionate, loveable soul, "dear old Petrie", he was our chief figure for me; called for punch instead of wine, he, and was gradually imitated.' As punch

<sup>1</sup> William Allingham, *A Diary*, pp. 137-9 and 133.

<sup>2</sup> Long afterwards published by Sampson Low as *Reminiscences of My Irish Journey in 1849*, pp. 48-9.



was a commoner drink and Dublin always the genteel corner in Europe, Petrie showed character in this. For the rest, he was 'a thin, wrinkly, half-ridiculous, yet mildly dignified man; speaks with a *panting* manner, difficult to find the word; shows real knowledge, tho' with sad credulity on Irish antiquarian matters', and in going home accompanied Carlyle 'in kindly mood' as far as their ways allowed. On this occasion, after seventeen years, the verdict was, 'Very amiable and good man; but can get no good of his writings.'

They walked out together then in the 'solitary streets', and Allingham's jottings in his diary let us overhear their talk:—

'Success of Prussia—nothing has pleased me so well for forty years. I knew it must be. Bismarck a hero—his disregard of the babble of people and newspapers, and of his own parliament.

'*History of Ireland*—I recommend you to try it. You may do a very nice book in ten years; not long, about the length of my *French Revolution*. It's a book that would have a large sale. Whatever poetic faculty you may have would be shown in this form, etc.'

'The death of Hugh de Lacy, where was that?' Allingham asked.

'At Durrow in Meath,' he quotes Carlyle as replying. 'Hugh de Lacy was looking at a new castle he was building, when an Irishman standing by suddenly pulled an axe from under his loose coat, and at a blow struck off Hugh's head, stretched forward, doubtless. Head and body fell into the castle ditch.' Carlyle added, thinking of his tour in 1849,—'I would have gone and looked at the spot if I could have found it,'—a reminiscence corroborated by notes made at the time. As they parted he said, 'Come again some evening at eight.'

The loyal Allingham, who as we know had already lost much time in abortive attempts to follow Carlyle's advice as to the writing of an Irish history, thought it over again, and moralised in the privacy of his notebook: '*History of Ireland*—lawlessness and turbulency, robbery and oppression, hatred and revenge, blind selfishness everywhere—no principle, no heroism. What can be done with it?'

## VII

## CRAIGENPUTTOCK

(1866)

MEANWHILE, the man who believed himself to be the 'heir-at-law' of Mrs. Carlyle, a nameless distant relative, wanted to grab the estate at Craigenputtock, and set an Edinburgh lawyer to work to 'assert his title'. Carlyle told Mr. Adamson, his agent in Dumfries, that he 'had understood Mrs. Carlyle had made a will at Haddington, but he had not heard anything about it for more than forty years.' Mr. Adamson wrote to Mrs. Carlyle's lawyer in Haddington. He was dead, but his successors made search as requested, and found and sent the will, in 'June or July, 1866'.

It was in Mrs. Carlyle's handwriting and dated before her marriage, but the wording showed that it had been drafted by a lawyer. In virtue of it, the title to Craigenputtock was Carlyle's. The lawyer of the 'heir-at-law' expressed satisfaction, and did nothing further, while Carlyle wrote a letter praising the faithful care of the Scots lawyers who had preserved the document so many years.

It is possible to blame the careless indifference to 'property, property, property' herein shown by the behaviour of Carlyle himself; but it was characteristic, 'for e'en his failings leaned to virtue's side.'<sup>1</sup>

## VIII

## A FORTNIGHT AWAY FROM HOME

(1866)

ON August 13, Jessie Hiddlestone, who was leaving to be married to Broadfoot, saw Carlyle for the last time.

'I went upstairs to his room to say good-bye,' she related.<sup>1</sup> 'He had not needed to give me any written

<sup>1</sup> The facts here told were communicated on 1.7.1903 by Mr. Grierson, then town clerk of Dumfries, but in one of the lawyers' offices in 1866, and directly acquainted with all that passed. His grandmother was a sister of T. C.'s mother, both of them daughters of John Aitken, farming 'Whitestane' near Dumfries, where they were born. See also *New Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle*, letter 1 and note.—D. A. W.'s note.

<sup>1</sup> To D. A. W.

character as I was not going into service again. He was in bed, resting on his elbow. We talked about everything, and I realised it was for ever, and was sorry I had thought of going away, and cried and said I would like to stay. He smoothed back my hair and kissed me on the forehead and made me feel very proud of myself, saying,—“ I don't know your intended husband, Jessie, but you'll get a good husband if he's as clever a man as the wife he's getting is a woman. You have been very kind to me and I shall miss you much.”

‘ My crying affected him too—we were thinking of *everything*. At last he said, “ I'm just going away on some visits, and in strangers' houses I'll not miss you so much as if I were staying at home.”

‘ So I was comforted and went downstairs and departed, though sorry to go.’

No doubt her departure seemed to the old man another break in the links binding him to the past—the loss of one daily source of contact with his dead wife. Mrs. Warren, however, stayed on for many years, and her niece was brought in to help.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. John went back to Scotland this month, and on the day Jessie left, Carlyle sought a fortnight's solitude, riding and sea-bathing, at Miss Bromley's, by Walmer, near Dover—ground he remembered well. He had spent a Sunday forty-two years before wandering over it in the company of Strachey and Irving.

‘ The country,’ he wrote to Dr. John of the journey down, ‘ once one got rid of the chaotic horrors of London, was old England all out, which to me is the highest known form of rural desirability, of peaceable modest beauty ; hop-gardens, woods, clean verdant meadows, people all in the heart of their harvesting,—it was positively a kind of medicine to my sick, depressed and sorrowful heart. . . .

‘ Miss Bromley is the hospitablest of women . . . and she has . . . actually *bought* some kind of bony cob ; I really believe, chiefly or altogether for my use here,’—‘ the beautifullest horse at command daily,’ as he said later, and the country around ‘ abundantly silent and pleasant.’

But he found little benefit from the change, although his hostess earned his lasting gratitude. His nerves were so

<sup>2</sup> Now Mrs. Wye, of Slough, a delightful old lady full of clear recollections of Mr. Carlyle, Mr. Ruskin, Mr. Dickens, Mr. Froude, and the rest.—D. W. M.

shaken that two or three extra persons at dinner spoiled his night's sleep.

Mentioning this visit in a letter to Emerson some time later, he told him: 'We read, at first, Tennyson's *Idylls*, with profound recognition of the finely elaborated execution, and also of the inward perfection of *vacancy*,—and, to say truth, with considerable impatience at being treated so very like infants, tho' the lollipops were so superlative. We gladly changed for one Emerson's *English Traits*: and read that, with increasing and ever-increasing satisfaction every evening, blessing heaven that there were still Books for grown-up people too!'

Lady Ashburton, just home from Switzerland, and off again to Lucerne, paid a whirlwind visit *en route*,—'shot across hither and staid over Sunday and Monday, very communicative especially to me.' She had a grand project to propound to him, which gave her visit additional excitement:—'that I should come to Mentone, and stay with her thro' the winter, till May next, *when* finally she is coming home. Excellent quiet place, ditto house,—rooms, methods, times all to oneself, beautiful "society" too, in short it was all beautiful, and the poor Lady's heart seemed to be set on it; so that I could see it would give *her* much pleasure that I should consent. She even engaged (volunteered) to ask Maggie Welsh too, who should screen me and *pad* everything into softness for me in the new scene. . . . I had even to *forbid* her from writing at once to Maggie by way of *showing* me! At first, and while she was talking, the thing had some plausibility; and I did not say absolutely no, but would consider: now, however, my thoughts left to themselves seem to go quite the other way; and I *scunner* not at the horrible 30 hours of steam jangle, but at all the other novelties and incongruities. I may give it a serious consideration, however.'

In any case, he must hear what Doctor John had to say about it, before he reached his decision, which he thought would almost certainly be 'No.'

The good news from Germany, at prospect of which he had already expressed his delight to Allingham, comforted him, and a letter from Neuberg, received on his second Thursday (23.8.1866) was 'the pleasantest' he had 'had for a long time', were it only because it told him Neuberg was at hand, and he could expect him to spend with him his first evening at home, which was to be Monday, August 27.

He did not delay till then to rejoice with Neuberg, however, and wrote at once.—

‘That Germany is to stand on her feet henceforth, and not be dismembered on the highway, but front all manner of Napoleons and hungry springing dogs, with clear steel in her hand, and an honest purpose in her heart: this seems to me the best news we of Europe have heard for the last 40 years or more. May the Heavens prosper it!

‘Many thanks also for Bismarck’s photograph: he has a royal enough physiognomy and I more and more believe him to be a highly considerable man—perhaps the nearest approach to Cromwell that is well possible in these poor times?’

The point of interrogation at the end doubtless implies an unwillingness to commit himself so soon to a final decision, for on such a matter nobody could yet be sure.

## IX

### GEORGE SMALLEY CALLS

(1866)

ON August 29 an American, George W. Smalley, who had presented a letter of introduction from Emerson, and had been promptly invited to call ‘to-morrow (Wedn’y) at 8 p.m.’ when ‘we will have a cup of tea together’, drove to Cheyne Row, and was struck by the humble surroundings and the unpretentious house in which Carlyle lived.

‘A maid-servant answered the bell,’ he recorded,<sup>1</sup> ‘and I was shown into a room on the left of the narrow passage on the ground-floor. . . . A lady came forward . . . Carlyle’s niece, Miss Aitken, and said in a whisper that her uncle was still asleep but that he expected me and I was to wait. On the left of the door, against the wall, was a sofa, and on the sofa was Mr. Carlyle. He soon woke and I introduced myself, Miss Aitken having vanished. . . . Americans, it was said, were less welcome than others . . . but I found that in this, as in some other points, the Carlyle of common report and the actual Carlyle were two different persons. His hearty way of saying, “Eh! and so you are a friend of Mr. Emerson,” and his outstretched hand, were

<sup>1</sup> *London Letters*, by George W. Smalley, pp. 291–9.

quite enough to put a shy man at his ease. Not even in America had I ever seen anybody to whom ordinary social usages were more obviously indifferent. It was the hour when London dines, and in order to dine arrays itself in swallow-tail and white tie. Mr. Carlyle had dined early, and the tall figure that rose from the sofa was clad in a dressing-gown of a red pattern reaching below his knees. He questioned me eagerly about Mr. Emerson ; about his health, and whether his fame at home grew, and his books sold. His manner . . . was gentle and affectionate.'

Carlyle announced that his habit was to go walking in the evening, and forthwith prepared to go out, although his visitor was worried because it was raining heavily. But the old man was indifferent to the weather, and in any case by the time he had put on hat and coat, and taken his stick, it had cleared. They walked in the darkness in the ' quieter corners of quiet old Chelsea ', Smalley keenly delighted to find himself in the great man's company, and ' it was a pleasure to note his firm, swift stride. His pace was such as few men of past seventy would have cared to set ; and he maintained it to the end. The stream of talk ran not less swiftly.'

He talked of London and Londoners, ' storming against the sordid and hollow life by which he was surrounded ', yet withal displaying ' flashes of kindly humour and human sympathy.' So for perhaps half an hour ; then back to Cheyne Row for tea, with candles lit and a fire blazing, and the teapot kept hot under ' its Scotch cosey '. Carlyle resumed his red dressing-gown, and ' the stern, strong, sad face reflected the pleasant light which shone on it, and his mood changed with the changing circumstances.'

He spoke of America, quite spontaneously :

' They think,' Smalley reports him as saying, sharply, ' some of you think, I am no friend to America. But I love America,—not everybody's America, but the true America ; the country which has given birth to Emerson and to Emerson's friends ; the country of honest toilers and brave thinkers. Never shall I forget that the first money which ever came to me for a printed book came from America. When your people reprinted *Sartor Resartus* out of *Fraser* they sent me a good sum for it. . . . By and by they republished my *French Revolution*. Do you know, I had not had a penny for that book from the English public till a good while after American friends remitted to me a pretty sum for it ? . . .

‘Yes,’ he went on, laughing yet serious, ‘I angered you all with my *Ilias in Nuce*, but who shall say I was not right ; or right *then* ? But you were the stronger at last ; you conquered, and you know people will have it I have said might is right. Suppose I did say it ? I knew what I meant by it—not what they think I meant,—there is a true, real meaning under it. A man is an atheist who believes that in the long run what God allows to triumph is not the right.’

His comment on the Civil War showed a patriotic American an opinion none too high of the military prowess of American armies : ‘You went up and down the country, did you not, with your fighting parties ?’

He plied his visitor with questions, showing himself keenly interested in every detail of a life which was strange to him—anxious to learn about American legal procedure, and a man’s chances of obtaining justice—‘supposing it was justice he wanted,’ he added, with a laugh.

When he laughed, wrote Smalley, ‘it was a portentous laugh ; open-mouthed and deep-lunged, and prolonged ; ending mostly in a shout of triumph, and seldom quite glad or kindly.’

After tea, he took up his favourite attitude by the fireside, and filled his churchwarden pipe ; and now there were no more questions, but instead a long monologue, reiterating the doctrines he had elaborated in his books—‘page after page of *Sartor* . . . not *verbatim*, but in substance’, and of *Past and Present* and *Latter Day Pamphlets*, and so on.

‘I never had a stranger sensation,’ Smalley concluded, ‘than in thus hearing from the mouth of the philosopher the oral repetition of his written and printed wisdom.’

## X

### THE EYRE DEFENCE COMMITTEE

(1866)

ON August 28 Carlyle wrote to his brother, Doctor John, from Chelsea : ‘Wednesday afternoon, the “Eyre Committee” is to have its first meeting,—which perhaps I may attend.’

Apart from other considerations, his wife’s spirited

championship of Eyre, and her conviction that he also would take the same view, may have influenced him, or at any rate caused him to be peculiarly interested. In any case, to one to whom the sufferings and injustices afflicting the working classes in his own country were an ever-present source of poignant unhappiness, the clamour raised over the results of stringent repressive measures in a distant island must have seemed peculiarly hypocritical and nauseating; for the very people who were loudest in their denunciations of Governor Eyre's sternness could and did turn a deaf ear to the plaints of a vast multitude of their own countrymen maltreated and starving before their very doors. The type of sentimentality from which this state of affairs springs was naturally abhorrent to Carlyle, who saw so much misery and injustice to be set right near at hand that he could have no patience with those who, blind to those present and near miseries, expended their charitable instincts upon causes comfortably far away.

This, indeed, it is essential to bear in mind in reading all that Carlyle wrote upon the Nigger Question, and allied affairs. With his heart wrung with sympathy for his own countrymen, for whom he laboured without stint to improve their conditions of work and life, he was compelled to regard the sufferings of Negroes in a remote dependency as of far less consequence; which, indeed, unless to a fanatic, they must be.<sup>1</sup>

In October, 1865, an insurrection broke out among the Negroes of Jamaica, several hundreds of them, who had been drilling secretly in the mountains, marching upon St. Morant's Bay, and shooting down and beating to death eighteen white men, magistrates, clergymen, and others, while thirty-one were wounded.

Eyre, the Governor, forthwith proclaimed martial law, in terms of the regulations for Jamaica, extending over the county of Surrey, where the disturbances had broken out, but not including Kingston. In ten days the rising was quelled; but there was no reason to suppose that the island was now safe. The ringleaders were still at large. Eyre, who had personally accompanied the troops, although not himself a soldier, and who had conducted the affair with admirable restraint and expedition, hastened back to King-

<sup>1</sup> These paramount considerations have apparently not occurred to Lord Olivier, who in *The Myth of Governor Eyre* (1933) attacks Carlyle for his opinions on the Nigger Question and on the Eyre case.



ston and searched out the root cause of the trouble, traced eventually to a coloured member of Assembly named Gordon, who had been in treasonable league with various insurgent leaders in different parts of the island. Gordon was arrested, and transferred to St. Morant's Bay, where martial law was still in operation. There he was tried by court martial, convicted, and executed.

Eyre had his hands full elsewhere. There was serious panic to cope with, and more than a hint of future outbreaks, so that it was left to the military commanders in Surrey County, under Brigadier-General Nelson, to complete the subjugation. Undoubtedly the measures taken were very harsh, and a total of four hundred and thirty-nine lives were sacrificed, three hundred and fifty-four people being tried by courts martial and executed for complicity in the rising and the massacre.

'When the news reached England,' Henry Taylor reports,<sup>2</sup> 'two parties were formed; the one abounding in admiration of the coolness, energy, and skill by which the Governor had suppressed a local and averted a general insurrection of the negroes; the other equally abounding in censure of the severities exercised in the process, and especially denouncing as unlawful and unpardonable the transference of Gordon from Kingston to Morant Bay, and his trial and execution under martial law.'

What the latter party had completely lost sight of is the clear fact that legality is not the ultimate and supreme test of the rightness of an action. Expediency cannot be overlooked. It is perhaps permissible to allow a known and habitual criminal to remain at large, and continue to practise his trade, for want of direct and irrefutable evidence of his guilt in a particular case; it can never be permissible to allow a dangerous revolutionary to continue at large, and endanger the peace of an entire country, and the lives of a large number of people, for the sake of a legal quibble. Eyre acted with promptitude and energy, seeking for the loophole in the law that would allow him to do what was needful to save Jamaica from a general flare-up that would have cost Britain an incalculable amount in human life and money. Ignorant sentiment, always ready to embrace a distant cause of whose merits it knows nothing, saw in his action only the illegality without realising its true significance.<sup>1</sup> Eyre was recalled from his post.

<sup>2</sup> *Autobiography of Henry Taylor*, Vol. II, p. 256.

A Commission of Enquiry sent to Jamaica came to the conclusion that the outbreak had spread with amazing rapidity, and that had it not been quelled so speedily in the quarter where it had first occurred, its ultimate suppression would have cost a far more terrifying loss of life and property; that, therefore, Eyre was to be praised without stint for his action; but martial law had been continued too long, the death penalty too frequently inflicted, and other military measures had been unnecessarily harsh.

It was found that Gordon was apparently a party to the insurrection, although the evidence adduced at the court martial was insufficient. The Mulatto had said shortly before: 'I have just gone as far as I can go, but no further. I have been asked several times to head a rebellion; but there is no fear of that. I will try first *a demonstration of it.*' Gordon's ally in the West, Levien, when the news of the massacre of Whites was received, attacked the Governor in his newspaper: 'A stern lesson will have been taught him. . . . What will he write to the Colonial Secretary as to the blood which testifies against his fatal misrule?' But immediately after Gordon's arrest and execution he writes: 'It cannot be denied that to the master spirit of his Excellency the Governor,—to the energy, prudence, and unhesitating action of Mr. Eyre,—the island and its people owe a debt of gratitude worthy of everlasting memory. Never has a righteous execution so instantly followed execrable crimes.'

Eyre himself refused to allow responsibility for what had been done to be shifted from his shoulders to those of the military men who had acted, in most cases, without his knowledge. His consent to the execution of Gordon had not been asked; he refused, however, to do other than express his approval and support his officers.

On July 27, a Jamaica Committee, with Mill as Chairman, and Huxley, T. Hughes, and Herbert Spencer supporting, determined to prosecute for murder. The Defence Committee was formed soon after, to provide funds for the defence, with the Earl of Shrewsbury and Talbot as President, Carlyle as Vice-President, and Tennyson, Ruskin, Kingsley and many others in support, protesting in every way against 'hunting down a man who had preserved to the British Crown the island of Jamaica, and the lives of all its white inhabitants.'

§ The clamour raised against Governor Eyre, Carlyle had

written from Dover to Hamilton Hume, on August 23, 'appears to me to be disgraceful to the good sense of England; and if it rested on any depth of conviction, and were not rather (as I always flatter myself it is) a thing of rumour and hearsay, of repetition and reverberation, mostly from the teeth outwards, I should consider it of evil omen to the country and to its highest interests in these times. For my own share, all the light that has yet reached me on Mr. Eyre and his history in the world goes steadily to establish the conclusion that he is a just, humane, and valiant man, faithful to his trusts everywhere, and with no ordinary faculty of executing them; that his late services in Jamaica were of great, perhaps of incalculable value, as certainly they were of perilous and appalling difficulty.'

In talk with Froude, he used a graphic simile:

'It was . . . as if a ship had been on fire; the captain, by immediate and bold exertion, had put the fire out, and had been called to account for having flung a bucket or two of water into the hold beyond what was necessary. He had damaged some of the cargo, perhaps, but he had saved the ship.'<sup>3</sup>

So it appeared to him, reviewing the circumstances and coming to the conclusion that Eyre was being maliciously and unjustifiably attacked, a public duty to range himself with Eyre's defenders, putting aside his private sorrow and overcoming his dislike of public appearances and public utterances, and he not only attended the meeting on Wednesday, August 29, but took the chair, as he did again the following Wednesday, when Ruskin 'was also present and spoke at some length.'<sup>4</sup>

Ruskin had been for some considerable time an adherent of Liberalism and the Broad Church, supporting both Mill and Hughes in their parliamentary candidatures; but he had come more and more of late under Carlyle's influence, and had come out into the open on 20.12.1865 with a letter to the *Daily Telegraph* as a supporter of loyalty and order. He took a prominent part in the work of the Eyre Defence Committee, no doubt actuated in part by a desire to lighten the burden of Carlyle, who was in no condition for so arduous a task as he had undertaken.<sup>5</sup>

Tennyson sent his subscription 'as a tribute to the

<sup>3</sup> Froude's *Carlyle*, II, p. 328.

<sup>4</sup> *Life of Carlyle*, Shepherd, II, pp. 240-2.

<sup>5</sup> *Life and Work of John Ruskin*, W. G. Collingwood, II, pp. 65-6.

nobleness of the man, and as a protest against the spirit in which a servant of the State, who has saved to us one of the Islands of the Empire, and many English lives, seems to be hunted down.' Ruskin gave £100; and even Dr. John Carlyle sent £5 through his brother, to help swell the funds.

Among those who attended and saw Carlyle 'often presiding at meetings in defence of Governor Eyre' was Samuel Carter Hall, a journalist and author only five years younger than himself.

'Carlyle had no pretence to eloquence, in the ordinary sense of the term,' he writes.<sup>6</sup> 'But in "thoughts that breathe and words that burn" he was a leader and a guide whenever and wherever he spoke—ardent, vehement, bitter; his tongue retaining to the last a marked Scotch accent . . . , broader and more noticeable when the speaker was under the influence of excitement, which he did not control, or attempt to control. Far from doing so, he gave way rapidly and unrestrainedly to the impulse of the moment; and, shaking his long locks as an enraged lion might have shaken his mane as he sprang upon his prey, would suffer himself to be carried away in a torrent of fiery talk.

'It was said of the elder Kean that his stage combats were "terribly in earnest". . . . So it was with Carlyle. He addressed his audience as if in its midst had been seated his mortal foe, pouring out execrations without stint, *imagining* an opponent he was bound to crush. . . . He had entered—warmly is too weak a word—into the cause of Governor Eyre, that "a blind and disgraceful act of public injustice might be prevented".'

Summing up the impression left on him by many meetings, Mr. Hall said, 'It seemed to me then that if the negroes of Jamaica had been dealt with by this fiery man of letters' instead of by Governor Eyre, they would, in short, have had much more to complain about. 'Assuredly Governor Eyre looked a merciful man,' conscientious, scrupulous, and just, while 'ample proof was obtained' that the Mulatto Gordon who had been hanged was the 'chief cause' of the rebellion, 'the tap root' of it, as Tyndall called him, or 'the "Obeah Man" to whom the mass of the negroes looked up as at once their priest and leader.' He had 'made no secret of his intentions' to massacre the Whites wholesale and seize the land for the negroes.

<sup>6</sup> *Retrospect of a Long Life*, by S. C. Hall, II, pp. 102-3.

In 1867, Lieutenant Brand and Brigadier-General Nelson were committed on an indictment for murder, but in spite of a biased charge by the Lord Chief Justice, occupying nearly ten hours, the jury refused to find a true bill, so that they were set free. On March 27 of the same year, the Shropshire Justices dismissed the case against Governor Eyre, which was revived the following year under a mandamus under the Colonial Governors' Act, which gave the Queen's Bench jurisdiction. The Grand Jury refused to find a true bill in this case also, Justice Blackburn, in charging it, expressing dissent from Cockburn, the Lord Chief Justice. In 1869, with the Jamaica Committee instigating, a series of civil suits was brought, the last of them by Philipps, a negro, against the ex-Governor, but Eyre successfully pleaded an Act of Indemnity, and three years later the Government paid his expenses, which amounted to £4,133, on a vote in the House of Commons of 243 to 130. In 1874 Disraeli's Government awarded him a pension as a retired Colonial Governor, and upon his death, on 30.11.1901, his widow received a small pension on the civil list.

The counsel employed by Mill's Committee in the Eyre case was J. F. Stephen. When the grand jury threw out the first bill, he advised against proceeding any further, insisting that Eyre was not morally but only technically guilty of murder. Another counsel was employed with the result that Stephen foretold. This may have caused a little coolness between him and Mill; but he continued a supporter of Mill, out and out utilitarian. Nevertheless, as his brother and biographer relates,<sup>7</sup>—'Carlyle was far more agreeable to him personally. The reason was . . . that Carlyle had what Mill had not, an unusual allowance of the quality described as "human nature".'

Stephen was never known to miss an opportunity of being with Froude, when Froude was going to walk with Carlyle.

<sup>7</sup> *Life of Sir J. F. Stephen*, by Leslie Stephen, p. 230.

## XI

## IRVING REMINISCENCES

(1866)

BY the end of September, Carlyle was deep in *Reminiscences* of Edward Irving, recalling the distant past and finding some measure of happiness in thus dwelling upon it. Coming to mention Irving's wife and kindred, he describes her 'tri-angular' face and blotched complexion, and so on,<sup>1</sup> reproducing with pathetic fidelity the talk of his own wife, whose 'perfectly genuine feminine dislike' of Mrs. Irving had amused Mrs. Oliphant in 1860. And none can doubt that Mrs. Oliphant was right in giving the same explanation of what he tells about the dress and much else of Mrs. Montagu, who had been good to them both, but seemed to Mrs. Carlyle too patronising. In 1866, at any rate, it never occurred to Carlyle to doubt his wife's accuracy, and so it distorted and discoloured his recollections, in many of the details which lapse of years had dimmed. In short, she came between him and reality, as Pope's Eloisa complained to her Abelard that he did,—'Thy image steals between my God and me.'

Occupied with *Irving*, Carlyle remained as acutely cut off from real companionship as ever, although friends were not lacking who sought to enliven the dark days for him.

'I am living quite alone for the last two months and more,' he wrote to his brother Alexander, in Canada; 'and tho' it is occasionally not a little dreary, and at all times sad and sombre more or less, I find it more supportable than most kinds of company I might have. . . . There was left me here an excellent elderly Servant,<sup>2</sup> of highly respectable, skilful and rational ways; with her, and a small *gleg*<sup>3</sup> little girl under her,<sup>4</sup> the house goes on quite reasonably well hitherto, and I have no disturbance on that side.'

To Doctor John, who had recommended him to try the services of a valet, he replied in a letter, 'A man-servant who understood me and his work, and would loyally try

<sup>1</sup> Froude's edition of the *Reminiscences*, I, pp. 116-18.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Warren, the cook-housekeeper.

<sup>3</sup> *Gleg*—clever, in Scots Gaelic *glìc*, wise.

<sup>4</sup> Possibly Mrs. Warren's niece, now (1933) Mrs. Wye.

to do it, would be indeed a prize ; but Forster cannot get one to himself ; and in truth I despair of such an article. By far the best *valet* I ever had is the Jessie just gone.'

## XII

## YOUNG LADIES

(1866)

IN October he received a letter from a young lady in New York City, who was anxious for information concerning his 'translations of Goethe's works', and who no doubt hoped for more than a mere note of 'information' from the famous old Chelsea figure. On October 21 he replied, at length :

'You pretty, but unreasonable child ! I never translated "Goethe's Works", nor any part of them but the "Wilhelm Meister", and some short fractions scattered up and down among my writings. The "Wilhelm Meister" (both parts), I would willingly send you, but the publisher here informs me that the conveyance, &c., to New York will outweigh any advantage to you, and that the direct and easiest plan is that you apply to "Johnston & Co." (address enclosed), who are close at hand, in case you actually want a "Wilhelm Meister", which is itself uncertain to me.

'Don't calculate on seeing me when you next come to London. I am grown very old ; have no desire—but the contrary—for being "seen"—and find my little remnant of time all occupied with infinitely more important things. Read me, read Goethe, and if you will be a good girl, and feel a call to do so, read all the good books you can come at ; and carefully *avoid* (like poison) all the bad, so far as you can discriminate them, which will be more and more, the more faithfully you try. Happy is he (still more is *she*) who has got to know a Bad Book by the very flavour ; and to fly from it, (and from the base, vain, and unprofitable soul that wrote it) as from a thing requiring to be left *at once* to leeward ! and let me tell you further, pretty little Juliette, reading, even of the best, is but one of the sources of wisdom, and by no manner of means, the most important. The most important, all-including is, that you *love* wisdom loyally in your heart of hearts ; and that wherever you

learn from a Book, or elsewhere, a thing credibly *wise*, you *don't* lose time in calling or thinking it "wise," but proceed at once to see how, with your best discernment, energy, and caution, you can manage to *do* it! That is the rule of rules: that latter.

'May your years be many, and bright with modest nobleness; "happy" enough they will be in such case—and so adieu, my pretty child.'<sup>1</sup>

While his daily task was the Irving *Reminiscences*, Carlyle had distraction enough to occupy him had he not held it at arm's length, and applications of all sorts more than ever: to say nothing of a romantic adventure which might have delighted anyone whose vanity was less under control. Here is how it was told by the heroine<sup>2</sup>:

'I was about to leave London to marry and settle in the country. Mrs. Carlyle had known all my affairs and I guessed she might have told him something. I had a great admiration for him, and though Mrs. Carlyle was dead—maybe all the more because of that, as he was so dependent on female advice and protection—I could not go away from London without taking leave of him. When I called, he was lying down for his after-dinner sleep, and I waited until he should waken, and then went upstairs, and knelt by the side of the sofa on which he lay.

'He asked me about where I was going, what I was to do, and so on, and told how he was. On the point of saying good-bye, the thought came to me, and I asked,—when would I see him again? He told me, very likely *never*: and that made my head swim—I could not bear the thought. I told him I loved him more than the man I was to marry, that he would live long if he were well taken care of, and that I would gladly marry *him* rather—I forget all I said. . . .

'He was utterly gentle and patient with me. I do not remember all his reply—he just gave my thoughts a turn in the *other* direction, and praised me and sent me downstairs so proud that I had gone several miles before I suddenly realised what a fool I had made of myself. I knew he would never tell, and I never told anyone. My home was hundreds of miles away, but I thought it best to say nothing.'

<sup>1</sup> The *Publisher's Circular*, 1.6.83.

<sup>2</sup> To D. A. W. She was a widow, truthful and elderly. D. A. W. undertook to give no clue to her identity.—D. W. M.



She went on to tell of several including the Dowager Lady Ashburton whose confidential way of referring to Carlyle was 'that dear, dear man'.<sup>3</sup>

About the same time a girl in low health and spirits wrote to Carlyle as a prophet—although personally a stranger—to beg advice. The reply she received was treasured; and many years afterwards she gave it to a friend who printed it.<sup>4</sup>

'DEAR YOUNG LADY,—Your appeal to me is very touching, and I am heartily sorry for you, if I could but help at all. In very great want of time, among other higher requisites, I write a few words, which, I hope, may at least do no harm, if they can do little good. Herein, as in many other cases, the "patient must minister unto himself"; no best of doctors can do much. The grand remedy against such spiritual maladies and torments is to rise upon them vigorously from without, in the way of practical work and performance. Our thoughts, good or bad, are not in our command, but every one of us has at all hours duties to do, and these he can do negligently, like a slave; or faithfully, like a true servant. "Do the duty that is nearest thee"—that first, and that well; all the rest will disclose themselves with increasing clearness, and make their successive demand. Were your duties never so small, I advise you, set yourself with double and treble energy and punctuality to do them, hour after hour, day after day, in spite of the devil's teeth! That is our one answer to all inward devils, as they used to be called. "This I can do, O Devil, and I do it, thou seest, in the name of God." It is astonishing and beautiful what swift exorcism lies in this course of proceeding, and how at the first real glimpse of it all foul spirits and sickly torments prepare to vanish.

'I hope you will not often have experience of this, poor child. And don't object that your duties are so insignificant; they are to be reckoned of infinite significance and alone important to you. Were it but the more perfect regulation of your apartments, the sorting-away of your clothes and trinkets, the arranging of your papers—"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might," and all thy worth and constancy. Much more, if your duties are of evidently higher, wider scope; if you have

<sup>3</sup> Corroborated to D. A. W. by a friend who heard it when Lady A. was a visitor at his house.

<sup>4</sup> *Thomas Carlyle*, by Moncure D. Conway, pp. 217-19.

brothers, sisters, a father, a mother, weigh earnestly what claim does lie upon you, on behalf of each, and consider it as the one thing needful, to pay them more and more honestly and nobly what you owe. What matter how miserable one is, if one can do that? That is the sure and steady disconnection and extinction of whatsoever miseries one has in this world. Other spiritual medicine I never do discover; neither, I believe, does other exist or need to exist.

'For the rest, dear child, you are evidently too severe upon yourself; these bad thoughts don't make you a "wicked girl," not until you yield to them; the excess of your remorse and self-abhorrence is itself proof of some height of nobleness in you. We have all of us to be taught by stripes, by sufferings—won't learn otherwise. Courage, courage! As to fasting, penance, etc., that is all become a ghastly matter; have nothing to do with that; work, work, and be careful about nothing else. Choose with your utmost skill among your companions and coëvals some real associates; be not too much alone with your thoughts, which are by nature bottomless. Finally, be careful of your health; bodily ill-health, unknown to your inexperience, may have much to do with the miseries. Farewell.'

## XIII

## WITH TYNDALL TO MENTONE

(1866)

CARLYLE was so sensitive to cold that Gavan Duffy and many other friends had often advised him to try the Riviera, and at length he allowed himself to be persuaded, in spite of his dislike of the long and tiresome journey. On November 28 he wrote to his brother John, in Dumfries: 'It appears I am actually to go to Mentone! Tyndall was here last night, one of the most determined of mankind; insists on setting off with me, depositing me scathless,—and will then, "after six hours or so," return! I was shocked to hear of such a thing undertaken for my sake; but it was vain to remonstrate,—as well remonstrate with the wind. He is a strange, lean, ardent kind of soul'—

and Carlyle would never forget his services on the Edinburgh journey.

Tyndall 'saw him frequently, and talked much with him about his plans.'<sup>1</sup> The Mentone suggestion had seemed at first quite impracticable, but when winter set in it became more and more apparent that a flight from London was imperative. Tyndall, reckoning up the days, found he could just manage to see him safely to Mentone and return in time for his duties at the Royal Institution. The proposal that Maggie Welsh should accompany her uncle had proved inconvenient, yet it was essential that someone should see him safely over the journey; and no one could have been more acceptable than Tyndall. They proceeded to make arrangements, and pack.

'Over the packing of his pipes,' Tyndall related, 'we had a wrangle. It was clearly evident that his mode of packing would bring the "churchwardens" to grief, and I emphatically told him so. But he would have his way. He knew how to pack pipes, and would be answerable for their safety. Out of fifty thus packed at Cheyne Row, three only reached Mentone unbroken. I afterwards enjoyed the triumph of sending him fifty without a single fracture.'

Jean came down to London to help her brother to 'get fettled for Mentone', and enjoyed all the sights, venturing out a bit after a while on her own. She stayed on with James after they had got Carlyle safely off with 'the daring inventive and successful' Tyndall.

They set out on December 22, with 'rime . . . in the air, sucking the vital warmth out of every living thing. . . . A raw breeze blew in our faces as we crossed the Channel, or rather a breeze created by the vessel's motion, for the air was still. I tried to muffle him up; but immediately resigned my attempted task to a young lady, who wound and pinned his comforter in a manner unattainable by me. Carlyle was interested to learn that his kind protectress was the daughter of Sir John Herschel . . . Miss Amelia Herschel.'

They spent the night in Paris at a comfortable hotel, where the only annoyance was a window whose creaking Tyndall had to overcome before Carlyle's sleep could be ensured. A friend of Tyndall's, Jamin, a Member of the Institute, met them next morning at the Gare de Lyon, assisted with the railway officials, and saw them off, com-

<sup>1</sup> *New Fragments*, by John Tyndall, pp. 371-88.

fortably settled in a *coupé* in the Marseilles train. Precautions had been taken against the bitter cold, and Carlyle was wrapped in a 'sheepskin bag, lined with its own wool, and provided with straps to attach it comfortable to the waist', which Tyndall had purchased in view of his expedition to the Mer de Glace in 1859.

'At Lyons,' he goes on, 'food, wine, and a bottle of water for the night were secured. The water-bottle stood on a shelf in front of us. "Observe it," I said to my companion. He did so with attention. At times the water would appear quite tranquil; then it would begin to oscillate, the motion augmenting till the liquid splashed violently to and fro up the sides of the bottle; then the motion would subside, almost perfect stillness setting in. In due time this would be again disturbed, the oscillations setting in as before. Carlyle was well acquainted with the effects of synchronism in periodic motion, but he was charmed to recognise in the water-bottle an analyst of the vibrations of the train. It told us when vibrations of its own special period were present in, and when they were absent from, the confused and multitudinous rumble which appealed to our ears. This was monotonous and permitted us to have some sleep. On opening our eyes in the morning we found a deep-blue sky above us, and a genial sun shining on the world. The change was surprising; we had obviously reached "the Sunny South".'

They broke the journey again at Marseilles, where Carlyle 'strolled about . . . all forenoon—strangest of exotic seaports,' as he wrote to his sister Jean; 'lanes uglier and darker than anything in old Edinburgh, and close by, streets, square, *parks* (i.e. clumps of excellent old wood, in fine broad avenues) equal to anything in London or New Edinburgh.'

Tyndall left Carlyle resting in the shade of some trees while he went off to their hotel, and when he returned he found him engaged in conversation with a paralysed beggar boy, whose miserable life-story Carlyle had extracted from him, and to the beggars 'singing in the streets for eleemosynary sous', Carlyle 'contributed liberally.'

The next stage of the journey was by rail to Nice, Carlyle disgusted with the noise and confusion of the Marseilles station, then a carriage took them, as a peaceful, soothing finish, over the hills to Mentone.

'The lights of Monaco shone below us as we slowly crept

over the hills. From the summit we trotted down to Mentone, reaching it at two o'clock in the morning. He was expected, and a loving friend was on the alert to welcome him. The reception was such as a younger man might envy. It was indeed plain to me that the storm-tossed barque had reached a haven in which it could safely rest.'

Tyndall did not, however, rush home after a few hours. He stayed a day or so, and they climbed to the high village of Sant' Agnese, Tyndall insisting, while Carlyle strenuously sought to dissuade him, on 'completing the ascent to the summit of the "Aiguille"'. They dined with sundry notabilities, and later a discussion on the sun as the physical basis of life led Carlyle to express his dislike of 'anything savouring of materialism'.

Next morning he went out for a sharp walk by the sea, and in the afternoon there was a long drive on the Corniche Road. The pure blue of the sky prompted an argument over Newton's suggested explanation of this phenomenon, Carlyle vigorously upholding Newton, whose views he had learned from Leslie, a 'high and trustworthy authority'. Tyndall argued against him—'an excellent man in his own line, but not an authority on the point under discussion', and they continued at it for some time, Carlyle finally ending it by lapsing into silence. After they got home, where a 'dependence' of the Villa Madonna had been 'placed at his sole disposal', and Tyndall had helped him into his dressing-gown, Carlyle threw himself into a chair before the fire, pointed to another, and said: 'I didn't mean to contradict you. Sit down there and tell me all about it.'

Tyndall obeyed, and Carlyle 'listened with perfect patience to a lengthy dissertation on the undulatory theory, the laws of interference, and the colours of thin plates. As in all similar cases, his questions showed wonderful penetration. The power which made his pictures so vivid and so true enabled him to seize physical imagery with ease and accuracy. Discussions ending in this way were not infrequent between us, and, in matters of science, I was always able, in the long run, to make prejudice yield to reason.'

Tyndall goes on to refute the charge that Carlyle was unscientific:—'The scientific reader of his works must have noticed the surprising accuracy of the metaphors he derived from Science. Without sound knowledge such uniform exactitude would not have been possible. He laid the

whole body of the sciences under contribution—Astronomy, from the nebular theory onwards; mathematics, physics, chemistry, geology, natural history—drawing illustrations from all of them, grinding the appropriate parts of each of them into paint for his marvellous pictures. Quite as clearly as the professed physicist he grasped the principle of Continuity, and saw the interdependence of “parts” in the “stupendous Whole.” To him the Universe was not a Mechanism, but an Organism—each part of it thrilling and responding sympathetically with all other parts. Igdrasil, “the Tree of Existence,” was his favourite image.’ Many ‘passages . . . in his writings might justify us in giving Carlyle the credit of poetically, but accurately, foreshadowing the doctrine of the Conservation of Energy. . . . It was the overwhelming importance which Carlyle ascribed to ethical considerations and influences, that determined his attitude towards natural science. The fear that moral strength might be diminished by Darwin’s doctrine accounts for such hostility as he showed to the *Origin of Species*. We had many calm and reasonable conversations on this and kindred subjects; and I could see that his real protest was against being hemmed in. He demanded a larger area than that offered by science for speculative action and its associated emotion. “Yes, Friends,” he says in *Sartor*, “not our Logical Mensurative faculty, but our Imaginative one is King over us.” Worship he defined as “transcendent wonder”; and the lifting of the heart by worship was a safeguard against moral putrefaction. Science, he feared, tended to destroy this sentiment,—which is perfectly true of what is called ‘science,’ knowledge of matter and force, exclusively pursued. ‘There are free-thinkers,’ Tyndall goes on, ‘who imagine themselves able to sound with their penny twine-balls the ocean of immensity. With such Carlyle had little sympathy. He was a free-thinker of wiser and nobler mould. The miracles of orthodoxy were to him, as to his friend Emerson, “Monsters.” To both of them “the blowing clover and the falling rain” were the true miracles. Napoleon gazing at the stars, and gravelling his *savants* with the question: “Gentlemen, who made all that?” commended itself to their common sympathy. It was the illegitimate science which, in its claims, overstepped its warrant—professing to explain everything, and to sweep the universe clear of mystery—that was really repugnant to Carlyle.’

In a few days Tyndall returned by steamer from Monaco, Lady Ashburton, Carlyle and a young lady all driving with him to the pier.

## XIV

CONTINUING *REMINISCENCES*

(1866-67)

ONCE fairly settled in Mentone, Carlyle resumed the Irving *Reminiscences* interrupted by his journey, finishing them on 2.1.1867, after which he commenced the *Reminiscences* of Lord Jeffrey, which occupied him for just above a fortnight. Southey and Wordsworth followed, keeping up his spirits by giving him the satisfaction of regular work dutifully done, and March 8 saw him at the end of them.

To Emerson he wrote, on January 27: 'These things I have half or wholly the intention to burn out of the way before I myself die:—but such continues still mainly my employment,—so many hours every forenoon; what I call the "work" of my day;—to me, if to no other, it is useful; to reduce matters to writing means that you shall know them, see them in their origins and sequences, in their essential lineaments, considerably better than you ever did before.'

Gladstone, passing Mentone on his way to Paris, made a call, on January 23, and sat a long time talking; and if he could have seen what Carlyle wrote in his journal after hearing him, would have excused himself by pleading that in a drawing-room and to ladies he had to dilute his palaver. 'Talk copious,' we read, 'ingenious, but of no worth or sincerity—pictures, literature, finance, prosperities, greatness of outlook for Italy, &c.—a man ponderous, copious, of evident faculty, but all gone irrecoverably into House of Commons shape—man once of some wisdom or possibility of it, but now possessed by the Prince, or many Princes, of the Power of the Air. Tragic to me rather, and far from enviable; from whom one felt oneself divided by abysmal chasms and immeasurabilities.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Froude's *Carlyle*, IV, p. 335.

To Caroline Fox he expressed himself equally emphatically :

'Oh, Gladstone! I did hope well of him once, and so did John Sterling, though I heard he was a Puseyite and so forth; still it seemed the right thing for a State to feel itself bound to God, and to lean on Him, and so I hoped something might come of him; but now he has been declaiming that England is in such a wonderfully prosperous state, meaning that it has plenty of money in its breeches' pockets and plenty of beef in its great ugly belly. But that's not the prosperity we want. And so I say to him, "You are not the Life-giver to England; I go my way, you go yours, good morning!"—and he concluded with 'a most dramatic and final bow.'<sup>2</sup>

## XV

### AT MENTONE

(1867)

'I SAW Carlyle at Mentone,' Thomas Woolner wrote to Allingham, on 9.2.1867, 'and was delighted to find the dear old fellow in good spirits; and Lady Ashburton was rejoiced in having the mighty man to pet and honour and make cozily comfortable. He was deeply grieved at the terrible loss of poor Hunt and said it contained *all* the elements of a tragic event. . . . Hunt was plunging deep into work hoping to keep the hard fixed sorrow at a kind of bay.'<sup>1</sup>

This was Holman Hunt, the painter, bereaved of the young wife he had married in 1865.

Caroline Fox, calling on March 5, found Carlyle in his private separate quarters, the pavilion attached to the villa, 'alone reading Shakespeare, in a long dressing-gown, a drab comforter wrapped round and round his neck, and a dark blue cap on, for he had a cold. He received us very kindly, but would untwist his comforter, and take off his cap, and comb his shaggy mane in honour of the occasion. He looks thin, and aged, and sad as Jeremiah, though the red is

<sup>2</sup> *Memories of Old Friends—Journals, &c.*, of Caroline Fox, II, p. 302.

<sup>1</sup> *Letters to William Allingham*, p. 292. See also *Thomas Woolner*, by Amy Woolner, pp. 275-6.



still bright in his cheek and the blue in his eye, which seems to be set more deeply than ever ; there is a grim expression in his face, which looks solemn enough.' <sup>2</sup>

He had written to his sister Jean, shortly before, about his cold : ' I had got a dirty cold, with which I have been obliged to apply to *castor* and take vigorous and judicious measures to check it, and set it on the *recoil*, as I hope it now fairly is ; reduced to *sniffling* again or alternate tickling of the wind pipe :—much reduced since yesterday, the *castor* day ! Natives answer my surprise by saying, " Everybody has cold in this season ; that it is not good to be in the sun ; that the sun is *treacherous* (perfidy) ! " I mean to take care of him a little better. It is certain, however, that much of my affliction arose from the *liver* ; " indigestion " is a thing I cannot with all my art avoid in this land of new ailments (and of multiplex irregularities to boot, in this otherwise so snug corner of it).'

Caroline Fox tells of his conversation, which turned after a while on the state of England and the Reform Bill :

' Oh ! ' he exclaimed, ' this cry for Liberty ! Liberty ! which is just liberty to do the Devil's work, instead of binding him with ten thousands bands, just going the way of France and America, and those sort of places ; why, it is all going downhill as fast as it can go, and of no significance to me ; I have done with it. I can take no interest in it at all, nor feel any sort of hope for the country. It is not the Liberty to keep the Ten Commandments that they are crying out for—that used to be enough for the genuine Man—but Liberty to carry on their own prosperity, as they call it, and so there is no longer anything genuine to be found ; it is all shoddy.' <sup>2</sup>

He asked eagerly of the Sterlings, saying he had always ' a sort of pious feeling about Falmouth and about you all ', and spoke also with enthusiasm about the beauty of the country around Mentone, and the wonderful climate.

' A little knock at the door,' concludes Caroline Fox, ' and a lady in black appeared and vanished, which was a signal that Lady Ashburton was going presently, but he said she wished to see us first, as she was going to see the Bunsens at Florence. . . . Then he took us to Lady Ashburton, whose carriage was getting ready, and we took leave of him. Lady Ashburton . . . encouraged our coming again to see Carlyle, thinking it quite a kindness to stir

<sup>2</sup> *Memories of Old Friends—Journals, &c., of Caroline Fox*, II, pp. 300–4.

him up. . . . She added, "I'm very fond of the old man, and I did what I thought was for the best, and I really hope he is the better for it in spite of himself." "

Writing to J. M. Sterling, on March 17, she mentioned how interested she had been 'to see how the true man came out when he talked of you—he had been grim in his views of England and things in general, but then the sympathy and tenderness shone out of him, and he dwelt on kindred themes in his own noblest spirit.'

Mary Boyle ('Vanessa') was staying for a while at an hotel in Mentone, and saw Carlyle often with Lady Ashburton, walking, driving, dining with them. 'It was thus,' she writes,<sup>3</sup> 'I learned to know and love Carlyle, of whose genius I had so long been an ardent admirer, that it was an easy transition from mere acquaintance to intimate friendship. . . .

'I met him afterwards in more than one country-house in England, and when we were together in London I was in the constant habit of knocking at the door in Cheyne Row at the hour when I knew I should have the chance of enjoying the society which I prized so highly.

'In one respect, and one alone, he reminded me of Walter Savage Landor, and that was the violent invectives in which he not infrequently indulged against persons, places, and opinions—a habit with which the readers of his life have become, alas! too familiar. I say alas! because I think the injudicious publication of such exaggerated expressions through the cold medium of printed words, conveys a most erroneous impression of the man himself. It is true that, even while talking with me, Carlyle would launch forth into the most unwarrantable philippics, but then he would break off suddenly, and all the venom and bitterness be drowned in a burst of ringing laughter, and his handsome, though naturally grim, face would ripple all over with good-humoured smiles, so that no one who saw or heard him could doubt for a moment the kindly nature and the tender heart.

'In the printed pages no friendly look is there, no tones of genial laughter, to counteract and soften down the words that look hard and uncompromising in black and white; and as I read the interesting record of his life, I earnestly desired that many passages might have been omitted.'

<sup>3</sup> *Mary Boyle, Her Book*, pp. 267-8.

## XVI

## MENTONE AS CARLYLE SAW IT

(1867)

MENTONE was something of a pleasant revelation to Carlyle, and the visit undoubtedly beneficial. So far was his judgment from being warped by the ever-present burden of his sorrow that he found the place 'beautiful as a very picture, the climate superlative (to-day a sun and sky like very June); the *hospitality* of usage beyond example.'<sup>1</sup> Lady Ashburton was the perfect hostess, establishing him in his separate quarters and leaving him to himself, to come and go as he pleased, and continue with his daily work uninterrupted.

'Everyone is kind to me,' he told his brother, Dr. John<sup>2</sup>; 'nothing can exceed the industry, patience, and continual contrivance of my hospitable Lady Ashburton; and she really has a great deal of sense and substantial veracity of mind. . . . She made dinner-parties at first, one or two; but finding me incurably abhorrent of them, generously gave it up. . . .

'The people are civil, polite, but as *idle* as any set of Italian-English can well be.'

Swinburne had seen Mentone in a far different light:

'Of *all the beasts* of countries I ever see,' he wrote to Pauline, Lady Trevelyan, in 1861,<sup>3</sup> 'I reckon this about caps them. . . . There ain't a hole in St. Giles's which isn't a paradise to this. . . . A calcined, scalped, rasped, scraped, flayed, broiled, powdered, leprous, blotched, mangy, grimy, parboiled country *without* trees, water, grass, fields—*with* blank, beastly, senseless olives and orange-trees like a mad cabbage gone indigestible; it is infinitely liker hell than earth, and one looks for tails among the people. And such females with hunched bodies and crooked necks carrying tons on their heads, and looking like death taken sea-sick. Ar-r-r-r-r! Gr-r-r-rn!

'Wal, I feel kind of better after that. But the aggravation of having people about one who undertake to admire

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Emerson, 27.1.1867.

<sup>2</sup> Letter of 9.2.1867.

<sup>3</sup> *The Letters of A. C. Swinburne*, edited by E. Gosse and T. J. Wise, I, pp. 10-11.

these big stone-heaps of hills and hideous split-jawed gorges ! I must say—in Carlylese—that “ the (scenery) is of the sort which must be called, *not* in the way of profane swearing, but of grave, earnest, and sorrowing indignation, the d—— sort.”

But Carlyle, ever sensitive to his surroundings, and unsurpassed in vivid description, saw with other eyes :

‘ My two rooms,’ he wrote,<sup>2</sup> ‘ bed and sitting, are in a separate house, “ pavilion ” so-called, one-half of it *mine*, the other a place for firewood and with only a Butler’s *bed* and a small guest’s-bed ; nothing of which do I ever hear of ; but live serene in my two airy and jaunty little rooms, high, newish, with big windows, commanding the finest silent prospect, on *both* sides.’ The Pavilion Madonna stood ‘ hill-ward and garden-ward, connected with *Villa Madonna* by a smooth-plastered parapeted terrace, *first-floor* high, perhaps about 40 paces in all.’ It was ‘ situated along the fine shingly sea-beach, at the safe and sheltered bottom of an *alcove* (properly two alcoves) in the beautiful outskirt and finis of the Maritime Alps, with the wild ragged peaks visible as if almost at arm’s-length, tho’ six miles away, so pure is the air and the light ; their bare savage tops, and their ample multiform green *petticoats* (of Olive, Orange, etc.) are certainly the airiest, strangest, and most picturesque bit of Earth I ever set eyes on : really quite a kind of pleasure to me, in the bright morning when I first sally out to recover heat ! For the peaks are in number manifold ; in shape, posture, aspect, perilous, audaciously graceful, and lie in the brightest sunshine, or oftener in sunshine and shadow mixed, which is still finer. Nay, with a sky *grey*, and the white mists climbing about among them, like hoods, like neck-cloths and scarfs,—I like right well to look at them,—to walk among them ; as I have done on such a day ; so silent are they, so mysterious and mournful, with perhaps some Convent bell jangling out of the unknown distance for a minute or two, awakening thoughts beyond this world ! —Up the ravines is generally some roughly paved passable Ass-path, sole *highway* to the Hill Villages ; there I pretty often go, and would go oftener, were my limbs and feet better : in bad weather, I prefer the carriage road (excellent highway, from Nice to Genoa, blasted out and Macadamed by Napoleon I.), part of which may be made to alternate with “ *Promenades* ” and streets by the sea.

shore. . . . Better "climate," in fine, I think I could not have found anywhere:—in strange contrast to what poor *you* are suffering just now!

## XVII

## LAST LETTER TO NEUBERG

(1867)

ON February 10 Carlyle wrote what was to be his last letter to Neuberg, who was even then engaged upon the translation of *Frederick*.

'I grieved to hear,' he told him, 'that you had been suffering, in those dark storms of your English Winter,—tho' still standing obstinately to your work, and now a little improved again since the boisterous thaws have come. Perhaps your *work* is a benefit to you withal; but I cannot help wishing you had done with it:—everything connected with that Book is more or less gloomy and miserable to me. . . . Ah me, Ah me!—In another winter, too, you might escape hither; and fairly have a quasi-summer instead; which to you might be especially beneficial, as perhaps it is now in some less degree to myself. It is certain I had no belief in such a winter climate as this has proved to be; and for bright sun, and beauty of earth and sea and sky, we might challenge the whole world! I never saw such a February even in my dreams. . . .

'For sublimity, the picturesque, etc. etc., I care less than most of my neighbours profess to do; indeed, except as *secondaries*, may say I care nothing: nevertheless it is a fact, I seldom yet rush out on a morning after bathing without some sentiment of wonder and almost pleasure over those wild stony Peaks (which girdle us all in from the North, and kindly press us upon the sea and the sunshine); they are wildest mountain architecture, towering up, jagged, sharp and bare, steeper than church spires (sometimes with a little *castle* perched atop, strangely near to you, tho' six miles off by measurement);—they sit there grim and cruel, like so many haggard old witches of Endor holding conclave,—stone-naked to the waists; but after that, furnished with the beautifullest green ample

*petticoats* (all of terraced olive woods and orange and lemon woods); the strangest thing I ever looked at in the "scenery" kind. I wander much by the wild rocky paths in the entirely silent olive woods; entirely solitary till the sun sink, and the poor peasant people (most of them old women) with their asses and packages shrink home, bidding me as they pass, "Bon soir, M'sieu!" which is nearly all the French the *old* part of them have. "Camino!" I hear them say to their donkeys;—the ass is most respectable here, indeed a fine loyal animal, and the staff of life to Mentone; at nightfall one meets on our main street endless rows of them filing home, loaded with miscellanies and big and small packages, which I sometimes wish to break into, and take some inventory of! These native people seem to be the poorest and the frugallest, also the peaceablest, civillest and probably happiest I have seen for a long time. There are 5,000 natives in Mentone; perhaps 4,500 of them of this poor class; nobody very rich that I have heard of, tho' several now making money by the English;—and the place all bursting out into villas, etc. etc. like a mushroom in a favourable night. . . .

'But enough,—write to me.'

In his journal on February 13 he noted: 'My thoughts brood gloomily, sometimes with unspeakable tenderness, too, over the past, and what it gave me and took from me. I am best off when I get into the brown olive woods and wander along by the rugged paths, thinking of the one, or of the many who are now *there*, safe from all sorrow, and as if beckoning to me: "Hither, friend, hither! thou art still dear to us if we have still an existence. We bid thee *hope*." . . . Let me be just and thankful. Surely the kindness everybody shows me deserves gratitude, too. Especially the perfect hospitality and honestly-affectionate good treatment I experience in this house, and from the wildly-generous mistress of it, is worthy of the heroic ages.'<sup>1</sup>

On February 24 he was writing to his sister Jean, begging her to convey his sympathy to the ladies of Craigen-villa, at the death of 'poor Grace', of which he had heard through James. He did not write to the sisters himself, 'knowing how paltry and even provoking are most "letters of condolence"'; but he mentions that the last time he saw Grace was on 'that saddest day of my life when I

<sup>1</sup> Froude's *Life of Carlyle*, IV, pp. 339-40.

had buried all that was most precious to me in the world : Grace was then the youngest of the whole party and one could little have expected that she was to be the first of us that should be called away. We shall all of us be called *soon* ; why should we sorrow over-much since it is but for a little while ? We shall go to *them* ; they will not return to us.' . . .

' The weather here,' he went on, ' continues almost too magnificent ; this morning on the " Promenade ", N. and South by the seashore (southward of the street and its edifices), the English people were seated with umbrellas above them, reading the Newspapers : a sun like July, in a sky clear as diamonds with the Mountains seeming within arm's-length though the farthest peaks are perhaps 10 miles away. . . .

' Public news, in the *Colony*, is the sudden death of poor Lord Brownlow last Tuesday : the Family go all off with the Body, for England tomorrow morning,—the poor mother much broken down in grief. She was Lady A.'s chief friend and resource in this place :—so that Lady A. is now, I think, almost sure to set off on her tour thro' the cities,—and indeed has fixed to leave on " Saturday afternoon " by the steamer for Genoa, which takes only six hours. It is not unlikely, if the weather continue bright, and this cold go *quite* away, I may accompany her so far ; with the option of returning next day, or Tuesday, if I don't take with the adventure. I confess a clear route homewards, in not many days hence, would please me still better ; and I must earnestly take thought about it.'

## XVIII

## THE DEATH OF NEUBERG

(1867)

NEUBERG was better when Carlyle's letter reached him. He read it to his neighbour Althaus, who found him ' in good spirits and busy as usual over his translation.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Reminiscences of Carlyle in *Unsere Zeit* of Leipzig, 1881, No. 6, pp. 830 et seq., by Friedrich Althaus.

This was the same Althaus who was by-and-by to finish what Neuberg was then doing, little as either then anticipated such a thing. Although long a neighbour, he had only lately become an acquaintance, on the occasion of preparing in 1866 a 'Life of Carlyle' for the *Unsere Zeit* of Leipzig. He read what was available in English, but, finding this inadequate, sent a series of questions to Carlyle, which, however, went unanswered. He then applied to a Scots friend for an introduction, but was offered instead one to Neuberg, 'who can tell more than anybody else about Carlyle'. He called at the villa at Hampstead by appointment, and Neuberg, 'an old gentleman of sixty', received him in the study 'as friendly as could be desired. . . . He ended many of my doubts and promised to ask about some details'—which he did, repeating to Althaus 'the very words of Carlyle'. Thus Althaus had been enabled to finish the small biography, and had then been rejoiced by a letter of appreciation from Carlyle himself. Long afterwards he learned from Froude through Max Muller that in September, 1866, Carlyle had corrected what he had written, filling gaps, inserting notes, and adding a Preface and Conclusion.

'I wished to make his acquaintance,' confesses Althaus, but 'remembering his wife's death and hearing from Neuberg how melancholy he was, I said nothing at all about that even to Neuberg.'

'I could not refrain from asking Neuberg some questions about himself,' he continues, and he seems to have put quickly on paper what he heard. Neuberg delighted to dwell on the help he had been able to give, and once when he had prepared for Carlyle a detailed history of the trial of Miller Arnold, he enjoyed the sight of the transfiguration of what he had written as it passed through Carlyle's fingers. A letter from Carlyle (30.11.1864) begins: 'Miller Arnold, which I have just been reading, will do with little correction;—therefore no more of it. Only can you tell me if his wife's name was Rosina or what?'

Neuberg had also kept Carlyle in touch with current German literature. Speaking of what he was then doing, he said: 'In translating I am often stuck for days because no translation pleases me. It comforted me greatly to read how Luther had been equally confused and non-plussed in translating the Bible.'

By the time he was reading to Althaus the letter from



Mentone, Carlyle had caught a cold, and had to pause in writing the *Reminiscences*, unable to do more than read Shakespeare and rest, feeling 'sad as the grave; *pure* sadness . . . my tolerablest need; all bitterness and discontent then taken away.' He rallied, and completed the scrap about Wordsworth then on hand, and noted in his journal, on 8.3.1867: 'Won't begin another. . . . Health very bad. . . . I live mostly alone; with vanished Shadows of the Past,—many of them rise for a moment, inexpressibly tender; One is never long absent from me. Gone, gone, but very dear, very beautiful and dear! ETERNITY, which cannot be far off, is my one strong city. I look into it fixedly now and then; all terrors about it seem to me superfluous; all knowledge about it, any the least glimmer of certain knowledge, impossible to living mortal. The universe is full of love, and also of inexorable sternness and veracity: and it remains forever true that "God reigns". Patience, silence, hope!'

He wrote to his brother John, suggesting that he should return to Chelsea to be there to receive him, and to stay with him for a while when the Mentone visit ended, and the doctor agreed. Lady Ashburton went off on her projected travels, and Carlyle came home to Cheyne Row and Doctor John in the middle of March, to find Neuberg ill again. A week later, on March 24, Neuberg died suddenly.

Carlyle wrote of him that he was a man 'of perfect integrity, of serious reflective temper, of fine and strong faculties . . . ever-loyal, ever-patient, ardent, ever-willing to do me service of every kind: . . . sat three months in the State-Paper Office, for example, *excerpting* there, with a skill and rapid felicity not to be rivalled. . . . Got no shadow of reward, nor sought any.'<sup>2</sup>

At the funeral, his affliction could be seen below his habitual reserve. Neuberg's sister saw his eyes filled with tears when she told him of a pipe her brother had had made to give him before he went to Mentone, but was prevented delivering by the fog which stopped him on the way to take leave. It was a meerschaum with a jointed stem, for use on a journey.

Carlyle begged her to give him the pipe yet; and though he never smoked it, he never allowed it to be removed from his writing-table, and might have been seen sometimes lay-

<sup>2</sup> Carlyle's *Journal*, April 3, 1867.

ing his hand upon it and taking it up in a caressing way.<sup>3</sup> He had a copy made of the best likeness of his dead friend, which was hung in his bedroom, to be within sight as long as he lived. He also had a death-mask taken, and a bust made which he gave to Neuberg's sister. In a letter of April 11, agreeing to her suggestion that Dr. Althaus be the man to complete the translation Neuberg had left unfinished, he wrote :

'If the Bust give you any satisfaction, surely I shall think it, all my days, to have been well worth while! No kinder Friend had I in this world; no man of my day, I believe, had so faithful, loyal, and willing a Helper as He generously was to me for the last 20 or more years. To look for his like again would be very vain indeed, were I even at the beginning of my course, instead of at the end! A man of fine faculty, too;—decidedly the most intelligent, swift, and skilful, at that kind of work, whom I have ever seen and known of. The memory of him will remain dear and noble to me;—the sudden stroke that has cut away such a Friend, in these my otherwise desolate days, may well be sad and heavy to me. But if so to me, what then is it to you and your dear little ones? Alas on this head I must *say* nothing. I will bid you be of courage, pious *courage*, and in all things try to do as you think He would have ordered and wished; which I believe will daily be your consolation in this sore trial.

'My Brother and I mean to venture up to see you before many days.'

On April 29 Doctor John and he called together in fulfilment of this promise, just before John departed for Scotland, and Carlyle remained a lifelong friend of Neuberg's sister and her children.

<sup>3</sup> It was safe among his papers when he died, still unsmoked, and shown to D. A. W. by Alexander Carlyle. See also *Macmillan's Magazine*, August, 1884, p. 297.

## XIX

## ABOUT DEATH AND HELL

(1867)

NOW that Carlyle was back from Mentone, Tyndall went often to see him, and they had 'various excursions together'.<sup>1</sup> One of these was to Melchet, Lady Ashburton's beautiful seat, from which they rode through the New Forest near by, drove to Lyndhurst, to see Leighton's frescoes, and had frequent walks together. One day they were caught in a violent storm, and Carlyle led the way to a spot in a wood some distance away, where he said he knew of a place in which they could find shelter. In the heart of the wood there was a clearing where the trees had been cut down, only the low stumps left,—'a solemn spot, perfectly calm, while round the wood sounded the storm.' Tyndall collected a bundle of dry dead fern to make a cushion, and placed it on one of the tree-stumps, so that his companion could sit down and rest. He filled and lighted his pipe for him, and while Carlyle smoked they resumed their interrupted conversation.

Earlier in the day, during their walk over the fields, Carlyle 'had been complaining of the collapse of religious feeling in England,' to which Tyndall had replied: 'As regards the most earnest and the most capable men of a generation younger than your own, if one writer more than another has been influential in loosing them from their theological moorings, thou art the man!' In this connection, Carlyle on another occasion admitted to Froude that he had 'given a considerable shove to all that'.

Now, reverting to the subject, Tyndall declared: 'Despite all the losses you deplore, there is one great gain. We have extinguished that horrible spectre which darkened with its death-wings so many brave and pious lives.'

'Yes,' Carlyle replied, 'that is a distinct and an enormous gain. My own father was a brave man, and, though poor, unaccustomed to cower before the face of man; but the Almighty God was a different matter. You and I do not believe that Melchet Court exists, and that we shall return thither, more firmly than he believed that, after his death, he would have to face a judge who would lift

<sup>1</sup> *New Fragments*, by John Tyndall, pp. 376-7.

him into everlasting bliss or doom him to eternal woe. I could notice that for three years before he died this rugged, honest soul trembled to its depths at even the possible prospect of hell-fire. It surely is a great gain to have abolished this Terror.'

## XX

## RUSKIN IS CORRECTED

(1867)

JOHN RUSKIN'S *Time and Tide* was being published in the newspapers in the form of letters to Thomas Dixon, the cork-cutter, and Letter XXV of 27.4.1867 began with some memorable stuff that was soon suppressed because of the noise it made.<sup>1</sup>

'On Thursday evening last,' he wrote, 'I was with Mr. Carlyle; and he was speaking of the differences . . . between the coast of the Mediterranean and the Thames shore . . . in the different temper of the people. The peasantry at Mentone were gentle and modest and kind; and he could walk alone, far among the hills, and meet with nothing but quiet human courtesy, and rendering of such simple respect as to an old man is both due and comforting. But in the streets of Chelsea, and London round it to the outer country . . . he now cannot walk without being insulted, chiefly because he is a grey old man; and also because he is cleanly dressed; and this temper of the London populace has been, he said, steadily on the increase for these last 20 years, so that now the streets have become clearly impassable to him, riding or walking, and he must either get through the quietest he can to the Park, or walk his rounds in the night.'

A working man at Rochdale wrote to Carlyle that this had 'gone the rounds', and asked about it. He was answered, on May 25: 'The thing now "going the rounds" is untrue, diverges from the fact throughout, and in essentials is curiously the reverse of the fact; an "incredible" (and at once forgettable) "thing". That is the solution of your difficulty.'

<sup>1</sup> Works of Ruskin, edition Cook and Wedderburn, Vol. XVII, pp. 480-2. Text here slightly abridged.—D. W. M.

This appeared in the *London Express* on May 29, and on the same day appeared in print a letter which Carlyle wrote to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, to the same effect, declaring Ruskin's paragraph 'altogether erroneous, misfounded, superfluous, and even absurd.'

The fact was that Chelsea was then less a bit of London than it is now, and was already proud of Carlyle, so that it resented 'as one man' such an imputation as was conveyed in Ruskin's words. Indeed a square in Chelsea was named 'Carlyle Square', which pleased him because it showed good will.<sup>2</sup>

On May 30 Ruskin wrote to Carlyle deploring 'that you have been induced to write this letter,' and requesting to be furnished 'with a succinct statement of what you remember to have said.'

Whatever Carlyle replied, Ruskin wrote on June 1 that he would *ignore* his letter, which seems to have been lost; and he continued: 'You have given the lie direct in the most insulting terms possible to the man who most honoured you. . . . He is compelled to require you to justify the terms of that letter, or retract them with all convenient speed.' He signed himself: 'Always affectionately yours, J. RUSKIN.'

He did not preserve Carlyle's reply. On June 3 *The Times* had a leading article which led Carlyle to write to it what appeared on the 10th:

'SIR,—I could still wish, by way of marginal note to your friendly article of Monday last (June 3), to add, for my own sake, and for a much-valued friend's, the two following little bits of commentary:—

'1st. That I by no means join in heartily blaming Mr. Ruskin, and, indeed, do not blame him at all, but the contrary, except for the almost inconceivable practical blunder of printing my name, and then of carelessly hurling topsyturvy into wild incredibility all he had to report of me—of me and indirectly of the whole vast multitude of harmless neighbours, whom I live with here, in London and its suburbs—more than 2,000,000 of us, I should think—who all behave by second nature in an obliging, peaceable, and perfectly human manner to each other, and are all struck with amazement at Mr. Ruskin's hasty paragraph upon us.

'2nd. That in regard to the populace or *canaille* of London, to the class distinguishable by behaviour as our

<sup>2</sup> *Thomas Carlyle*, by Moncure D. Conway, p. 114.

non-human, or half-human neighbours, which class is considerably more extensive and miscellaneous, and much more dismal and disgusting than you seem to think, I substantially agree with all that Mr. Ruskin said of it.'

His friend, however, was not appeased, and noted in his diary, on June 14: 'Ugly letter from Carlyle.' But on June 26 he records that he was 'at Carlyle's in evening', and they resumed henceforward their affectionate intercourse. Moncure Conway, who was a friend of both, can hardly be mistaken in his explanation of the matter<sup>3</sup>: 'The facts were that as Carlyle was returning home from his afternoon walk, one or two rough lads called out to him. Either Ruskin witnessed the incident or Carlyle mentioned it. . . . However that might be, Ruskin in hot resentment proclaimed with bitterness that Carlyle could not walk about Chelsea without being jeered at. In fact Chelsea was proud of Carlyle, who wrote that Ruskin's statement was the reverse of the fact. Carlyle was troubled at having to do this, but said to me, "The Gods could not save Ruskin."'

Ruskin, lecturing at the Royal Institution at the time, accepted the correction of his statement.

## XXI

### G. F. WATTS HAS SITTINGS

(1867)

IN June, 1867, and perhaps a few days earlier, Carlyle gave sittings to G. F. Watts, the moral-sublime and earnest painter and sculptor,<sup>1</sup> commissioned by John Forster. Watts used to tell his wife afterwards, 'Carlyle was an impatient sitter . . . though he tried to conceal the fact,' and this affected the painter's nerves and spoiled the portrait. But there was more than this to disturb him. They had many discussions, and Watts admitted that he tried in vain 'to open the eyes' of his sitter 'to the value of art outside the historical record in a portrait.'

The Elgin marbles were mentioned. Carlyle had seen

<sup>3</sup> *Autobiography* of Moncure D. Conway, II, p. 106.

<sup>1</sup> *George Frederic Watts*, by M. F. Watts (his wife), I, pp. 247-50, and II, pp. 231-2.

them, and declined to indulge in 'cant', declaring,— 'There is not a clever man among them all, and I would away with them—away with them into space.'

Watts demanded to know how he could possibly see that, and was told the jaw was not prominent enough.

'Depend upon it,' Carlyle said emphatically, 'neither God nor man can get on without a jaw,' which was also the opinion of many artists and observers.

This led to a discussion on physiognomy in general, and they debated other features. When Carlyle remarked that 'the long upper lip is a sign of intellect', Watts opposed Napoleon, Byron, and Goethe, short in the lip, every one of them, which was a palpable hit; and when Carlyle rashly said that the brown eye betokened the active temperament and the grey eye the contemplative, Watts was ready with Napoleon again—Guizot had seen him in Switzerland and told Watts he could never forget the steel-coldness of his eye.

As usual Carlyle was glad to learn. Watts proudly preserved a long extract from a book describing Mahomet, and a note at the end of it, which came from Carlyle on June 18: "Mahomet's eyes were large, black, and full of fire (*Biographie Universelle*, tome 26, p. 206, by Silvester de Lacy). For its excellence and clearness, from which *you* might paint, I have had the whole description copied for you, and send it revised with my compliments."

There is something touching in Carlyle's admiration of the long upper lip. He could not conceive that any feature of his Jane was other than admirable. If it was not beautiful, it must be better than merely beautiful.

## XXII

### DEATH OF JOHN CHORLEY

(1867)

JUNE was saddened by the impending death of an old friend, John Chorley, whose best title to remembrance is that we owe to him the preservation of Carlyle's *Historical Sketches*. He was a Lancashire man, 'whom it seemed to me,' said Espinasse,<sup>1</sup> a good observer, 'Carlyle

<sup>1</sup> *Literary Recollections* by F. Espinasse, pp. 231-2.

liked as much as he liked anybody.' One of the pleasantest hours that Espinasse ever passed at Cheyne Row was 'listening to Chorley while he described to Carlyle the hardships and privations endured in the Polar regions by the officers and men of a Government Arctic Expedition, and the devices by which the officers endeavoured to keep up the spirits of the men.' One of John Chorley's 'specialities' was an unusual knowledge of the British 'navy in all its branches', according to Espinasse, who adds that Carlyle admired the navy and 'delighted to hear Chorley dilate' upon it. It was a pleasure he was now to lose.

On 19.6.1867 he wrote<sup>2</sup> to Chorley's brother Henry, lamenting that he had been too 'light and hopeful' the last time he had been with his friend, now dying, and telling how 'I am kept in knowledge of the progress of things from day to day towards their inevitable goal; and I thank Heaven along with you, that pain and irritation are quite gone, and that *sleep* and quiet are now the attendants of that ardent soul in its final rest. Final and perfect, where all the weary do at length *rest*!

'If in any fit moment you could whisper to him, that I, who owe him so much, did always honour and esteem him as few others; am touched to the heart with what is going on, know well what loss I am sustaining, and shall piously regret him all my remaining days, the fact will abundantly support you; and should the *opportunity* offer (*not otherwise, I beg*), it will be a drop of consolation to me.

'May God be with him! May God be with us all!'

Chorley died on June 29, and Carlyle wrote of him: 'For these thirty years past a warm and faithful friend of mine. . . . A man of clear sharp intellect, and fine practical faculties and habits; of extensive accurate scholarship, and ditto inquiry; one of the best-informed men to be met with,—decidedly the best-*read* man I knew in London, or indeed elsewhere in these last years. He has left no "fame" or general recognition in any kind, behind him. . . . *Ay de mi*, no more will he rise up, pen joyfully flung down, sharp wiry face relapsing into a sunny smile, and kind right-hand held out, on my entrance at any time!'

The funeral was on July 4, with Carlyle, Dr. Woolmer, and the two brothers as the only mourners, along with

<sup>2</sup> *Thomas Carlyle*, by R. H. Shepherd, II, pp. 252-4, and *Henry Fothergill Chorley*, by Henry G. Hewlett, II, pp. 284-7 and 292.



three servants, the only record to go on the tombstone being, in Henry's simple words: 'An upright man and an excellent scholar', with name and dates.

Henry Chorley, as executor, had a legacy of £1,000 to pay to Carlyle, who wrote to him again,<sup>3</sup> on July 11: 'I knew generally, or understood, long since by some casual hint or transient question to me by Him whom we have lost, that the bulk of his property was to go in literary charities. I think he said the Literary Fund. And once again, long afterwards, I remember to have heard him speak, in reply to some question of mine, about your brother William's commercial misfortunes. Now if it be that there is any lack, or chance of such, in that *latter* quarter, permit me to urge with emphasis that as there is no shadow of it here, it would gratify me in a much higher and richer degree if I might be permitted to lay down there the actual sum of money in question; retaining ever the soul and essence of it, that is to say, the sacred memory of it, which would be among the perennial jewels of my life, more precious far than any gold!'

The money was paid over to Carlyle, who told Espinasse he did not need it and thought of sending it all to the Literary Fund, since William Chorley did not need, or would not take, it.

Before the end of the year William wrote to enquire about the literary work on which his brother had been engaged when he died, but Carlyle had to tell him there was none.—'According to all I knew I had no reason to think there was any work in composition going on in the studious secluded little room where I was always so brightly welcomed, and which has now fallen vacant to you and to me forevermore! Whenever of late years I entered it in the day time, your Brother sat diligently at work; but I understood always, and expressly heard now and then, that it was upon cataloguing of Spanish Books, etc. . . . I often urged upon him to write a Book on Spanish Literature; some good Book, worthy of himself, and of his wide and exact knowledge, on a Spanish subject: but he never would consent even to try. He could have written like few men, on many subjects; but he had proudly pitched his ideal very high; and far preferred silence and peace to any prize in that other direction. I know no man, nor shall ever again know, nearly so well-read, so widely and

<sup>3</sup> *Athenæum*, 24.2.1883.

accurately informed, and so completely at home not only in all fields of worthy literature and scholarship, but in matters practical over and above. My own loss in him I may well feel to be great;—none of us will ever see his like again.'

## XXIII

## BEQUEST OF CRAIGENPUTTOCK

(1867)

LACKING employment, unable to occupy himself adequately at the only work he knew—writing—Carlyle found little to distract his thoughts. One piece of business, however, gave him a melancholy pleasure at this time. Craigenputtock had now become wholly his, and he had decided that it should not continue in his family, but should be used in some way as a tribute to his wife.

On Thursday, June 20, a deed was ready which had been prepared in Edinburgh in accordance with his draft of instructions, still preserved. In memory of Mrs. Carlyle, who was the last of her kindred on her father's side, it gave her estate of Craigenputtock to the governing body of Edinburgh University, in trust for ten equal 'John Welsh' bursaries, thus preserving his wife's maiden name. David Masson had piously 'taken endless pains' to save him any trouble over details. As a professor of the University he was not an express witness; but he came to see the deed executed and, as Carlyle notes, he 'read us the deed, with sonorous emphasis, bringing every word and note of it home to us.' Then it was signed, with Forster and Froude as witnesses.

The bursaries were all to be allotted 'to the worthiest . . . on strict and thorough examination and open competitive trial . . . or if (what in practice can never happen, though it illustrates my intention) the claims of two were absolutely equal, and could not be settled by further trial, preference is to fall in favour of the more unrecommended and unbefriended. Under penalties graver than I, or any highest mortal, can pretend to impose, but which I can never doubt—as the law of eternal justice, inexorably valid, whether noticed or unnoticed, pervades all corners of space

and of time—are very sure to be punctually exacted if incurred, this is to be the perpetual rule . . . in deciding.’

He stipulated that ‘Bursars are not permitted to hold any other bursary or similar endowment . . . are permitted to compete for any other . . . but, if successful, shall renounce the bursary they held. . . .’

‘Five of the “John Welsh” bursaries shall be given for best proficiency in Mathematics (I would rather say “in Mathesis”, if that were a thing to be judged of from competition) but practically, above all, in pure geometry. . . .’

‘The other five bursaries I appoint to depend . . . on proficiency in classical learning—that is to say, in knowledge of Latin, Greek, and English, all of these, or any two of them; but . . . the Senate of the University, in case of a change of its opinion on this point hereafter in the course of generations, shall bestow these latter five bursaries on what it does then consider the most excellent proficiency in matters classical, or the best proof of a classical mind.’

In 1867 and for long afterwards there was no choice of languages allowed at British Universities. Carlyle had never missed an opportunity of exposing the absurdity of insisting upon Greek and Latin teaching, but he had to accept the existing conditions in arranging the bursaries, and could only beckon as from a distance to the time that would come when the existence of modern classics would be fully recognised. So many classical scholars were inclined to despise a man who ‘read an author for the meaning’. Their ideal was to concentrate on the paragraph, turn from it to the sentence, from the sentence to the word, and from the word to the letter.

The powers of the Rector were nominal, and Carlyle could do no more than see to it that he made the bursaries as secure as possible, although his insistence on eternal justice is strange reading embedded in the jargon of Scots law.

## XXIV

## LETTERS TO OLD BETTY

(1867)

NOBODY could sympathise so well with Carlyle's devotion to his wife's memory as 'old Betty', Mrs. Braid of Edinburgh, who had been like a second mother to her when she was a girl. In 1865, when Betty's only son died, Mrs. Carlyle in writing to her had said,—'Indeed, indeed, it is the sort of love one has for one's own mother that I have for you, my dearest Betty!' So on the anniversary of his wife's birthday, July 14, Carlyle sent Mrs. Braid a present and a long letter.—

'You will not get this till Tuesday morning: but you see what day it is and the meaning of it will need no explanation to you. It is a solace to my own heart to send it you in memory of her who is gone from us, far away, and does not now reckon by *days* or by *time* and its changes and labours, as we (for a little while) still do! . . . To you also I know well how dear and beautiful she was and is.

'You need not answer anything, dear Betty.'

He added some details of such news as he thought would interest her, concluding: 'God be with you always, dear Betty; so long as I live, know that you do not want a friend.'<sup>1</sup>

The good Erskine of Linlathen, 'Saint Thomas', as Carlyle used to call him, 'pious, lucid and loving, a Nathanael' in whom was no guile, 'took on him as a bequest the love that was felt for Betty' by Mrs. Carlyle<sup>2</sup>, and used to drive often out to her cottage as long as he lived. When he died at 82 in the year 1870, she was already 80, but had five years more during which Carlyle continued to write to her every July,<sup>1</sup> and there were many friends of both who spared her the trouble of replying by keeping him posted as to how she was.

Every mail delivery in these days brought Carlyle a heap of letters from people, strangers for the most part, seeking advice, or help, or interviews. Advice and help

<sup>1</sup> These letters and other details in addition to what Alexander Carlyle has given are from the volume of cuttings, &c., about Carlyle lent by Oscar Gridley, and carefully prepared by R. H. Shepherd.

<sup>2</sup> *Memories of a Long Life*, by Col. Davidson, pp. 330-4.

he readily granted, but interviews were beyond his strength. His patience, sorely tried, was never exhausted. Every letter received an answer. His wife had had a number of 'pensioners', people to whom she gave assistance, and Carlyle carried on this work, generally anonymously. He delighted to assist the deserving, and to do so with the minimum of fuss, preferring to remain in the background so that there could be no acknowledgment of indebtedness to him. Nine-tenths of the letters that came, he records in his journal, were requests for help.

One exception, written from 34, Northumberland Street, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and of which only a fragment remains, was from 'a poor man, and a humble student of hitherto somewhat obscure history under your guidance'; it was apparently a request for information about editions of Carlyle's works, and was replied to by return of post, on the reverse of the sheet, a mark of Carlyle's endless sympathy towards the serious-minded working-man.<sup>3</sup>

## XXV

### SWINBURNE AND HIS BALLADS

(1867)

IN Balliol College, Oxford, this year, they told of a 'Balliolman', A. C. Swinburne, notorious for a recent book of ballads which had the obscenity of Byron without the wit, swinging and sonorous and pattering like rain.

Allingham reports, in his *Diary* (p. 258) that Carlyle's dictum on him was that 'there is not the least intellectual value in anything he writes'. 'A fuzz of words' was another phrase, and Allingham himself declares (p. 143): 'I read in Swinburne's volume, lent me by Ned, but can't like it: great display of literary power of a sort, to what result? So elaborated, so violently emphatic, so really cold-blooded.'

At a 'large dinner party' in London, or it may have been a breakfast, a friend of Swinburne, perhaps Monckton Milnes, Lord Houghton, his admiring critic,<sup>1</sup> said to Carlyle:

<sup>3</sup> I am indebted for this fragment to Mr. A. S. Umpleby, Middlesbrough, Yorks.—D. W. M.

<sup>1</sup> *Life of R. M. Milnes, Lord Houghton*, by T. Wemyss Reid, II, p. 136, and p. 177 (footnote).

'Young Swinburne is here. Will you allow me to introduce him to you?'

'Not before you tell him what I think of him and his writings,' Carlyle replied.

'And what is that, please?' the other naturally enquired.

'This, that he sits in a cesspool and adds to it.'

The poet had of course to be told of Carlyle's candid opinion of him, although it is not recorded whether he persisted in seeking the introduction. The story is traceable to Andrew Lang, who may have repeated it as a joke, but it is quite probably accurate, and would explain the later vituperation of Carlyle by Swinburne and his like.<sup>2</sup>

## XXVI

### SHOOTING NIAGARA: AND AFTER?

(1867)

**B**EFORE and after the Mentone trip, Mr. Brookfield often came to see Carlyle, and in an undated letter to a friend, which seems to fall in 1867, gives a glimpse of him: 'I sat with Carlyle a couple of hours a few nights ago. He has very much recovered himself, and talks much as before, though it is plain his bereavement is seldom off his mind. But he can laugh as spasmodically as ever,'—which is reminiscent of Emerson's comparing the laughter of Carlyle to 'earthquakes, making mountains shake'.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Brookfield asserted, in speaking of Carlyle to others, that he was 'a profoundly religious man', and was told in reply that his religion was 'without a creed'.<sup>2</sup>

Carlyle had by now certainly attained a measure of serenity although beneath the surface his deep sorrow remained with him; but a welcome distraction came in a uniform stereotyped edition of his complete works, which he set himself earnestly to edit and revise and index with all his old meticulous care. It was work very well suited to his present condition, since it required application for

<sup>2</sup> This story grew into rumours, several of which D. A. W. tracked in vain. In 1917 it came to him like manna from the sky from A. Montgomerie Bell, Banbury, who had heard it at Balliol in 1867.—Note by D. A. W. on MS.

<sup>1</sup> Emerson's Essay, *An Introduction to Past and Present*, last para.

<sup>2</sup> *Mrs. Brookfield and her Circle*, II, pp. 520 and 525.

only a reasonable time every day, and gave him definite and regular occupation.

His reviving interest in everyday things led him also to pour out his fervent denunciations of a political move which was then being got in train, and in which he saw the first great stride towards ultimate chaos and destruction. The Reform Bill was pending, to give votes to about a million of men, ignorant and poor, and easily manipulated. The Lords were on the point of passing it, at the beck of Disraeli, in order to 'dish the Whigs' by beating them at their own game. Honest Conservative critics and such Liberals as Lowe denounced it as a trick, which of course it was, and fraught with immediate mischief ; but Carlyle, looking down the gulf of time for generations, as befitted one who had seen back to the beginning of things, as far as history could show, and whose vision was not circumscribed by present expedient, realised a graver import and a much greater menace than the immediate one. It was to him axiomatic that the representatives of an electorate are *representative*, tending to reflect more or less accurately the mentality of the people electing them ; that therefore an extension of the franchise, lowering the average of intelligence in the constituencies, was bound speedily to lower the standard of intelligence among their representatives ; and that the successful politician would be he who was able with the least scruple and with the greatest audacity to appeal directly to the baser instincts of the voters : that, in short, democracy bred demagogues, not heroes, or men fit to govern, and that the more widely the democratic principle was applied the greater deterioration there would be in the type of politician. The orator, like the soldier, is trained and armed, and with his training and his arms may do good, but may equally do evil. The mountebank capable of appealing to the ignorant masses, with extravagant promises and frenzied appeal to debased emotions, would triumph over the honourable, upright, and outspoken statesman—conclusions, these, which have been borne out in striking manner by parliamentary development of recent years, when democracy has at last got itself reduced to a kind of deadlock, which Carlyle predicted, and is being discarded wholesale by so many nations.

Carlyle expressed himself in vivid and telling phrases in a pamphlet which, under the title of *Shooting Niagara : and After ?*, was printed in *Macmillan's Magazine* in August,

1867. The second reading of the Reform Bill in the Lords was put down for July 22, while the article was in the press.

The state to which the country had been reduced had been brought about by 'traitorous politicians, grasping at votes . . . from the rabble.' Disraeli is described as 'a superlative Hebrew conjurer, spell binding all the great Lords, great Parties, great Interests of England to his hand in this manner, and leading them by the nose, like helpless mesmerised somnambulent cattle. . . . This clever conscious juggler steps in' displacing 'other jugglers, of an unconscious and deeper type'—which was all much too accurate to be ignored, although Disraeli probably felt rather flattered than insulted ; but some curiosities of literature are linked to these few words, which are a merely subordinate part of the great argument.

David Masson, who was editor of *Macmillan's Magazine*, has reported that the first proof read 'swindlers' where 'jugglers' is now. He was delighted to have the article to print, but feared that 'swindlers' might seem to a misguided jury actionable, and that to please the politicians the judges might—some of them with ambitions—be willing to mislead a jury. He reflected how well Carlyle had always avoided the personalities that used to disgrace periodical literature, and decided to risk a remonstrance against the dangerous word. 'Might it not be misunderstood? Or made an excuse to give worry in the courts?' Carlyle at once substituted 'jugglers', which got over the difficulty.<sup>3</sup>

The article was reprinted in September as a pamphlet, which had an enormous sale.

At this time, the post of Historiographer Royal for Scotland was vacant, and the Lord Advocate, Gordon, had put down a set of three names, for the Cabinet to make its choice ; and one of those names was Thomas Carlyle. But before the names were formally considered, or even known to all the Cabinet, *Macmillan's Magazine* with *Shooting Niagara* appeared. The Lord Advocate was alarmed at the licence of language—'calling Cabinet ministers jugglers!'—and put down another name instead of Carlyle's.

When Mr. Stirling of Keir told this to Masson, he carried the news to Carlyle, who said,—'The post would have been of value to me at one time. I suppose it would have been mine, if the Muse of Scottish History had not been a goose. I must remember to take an interest in Gordon,' he con-

<sup>3</sup> Told to D. A. W. by David Masson on 20.3.1897.



cluded, and used to enquire about him afterwards kindly, showing a completeness of modesty inside, which surprised even Masson who knew him so well. He was grateful to Gordon for the goodwill manifested in putting his name down, and overlooked, as if it did not concern him, the subsequent removal of his name.<sup>4</sup>

*Shooting Niagara* is not fine literature—it is too compact, too earnest : ‘ very fierce, exaggerative, ragged, unkempt, and defective,’ its author thought. But like a shapeless ingot of pure gold, it is ready for immediate use. The Politics are *Sartor’s*, up to date but little changed. From writing ‘ the History of England as a kind of Bible ’ down to Sanitary Improvements, from Christianity to common Royalty, the reader sees every aspect of public life as if transfigured, pierced by Röntgen rays ; and may feel without an effort as if beholding it from above, so that a generation is like a day.

Its bearing on immediate politics grows dimmer as time passes. Carlyle’s disciple, George Grey, was then governing New Zealand and in violent tussle with the financial interests whom Disraeli delighted to serve. A biographer of Grey may be right in supposing that his example was present to Carlyle when he suggested that some ‘ young fellow ’ might be set to govern one or other of the West Indian islands. Grey had become Governor of South Australia before he was thirty.<sup>5</sup> In matters colonial, at any rate, the British peerage stood not for efficiency, but for exploitation, and so far as Carlyle appealed to it he failed ; but most people overlooked the fact that he mainly addressed himself to the ‘ Aristocracy by Patent from God the Maker ’, a class conspicuously absent from hereditary legislatures and most others.

Until recently it was common to regard Carlyle’s diatribes against the democratic principle as having been utterly mistaken ; but the view he took was a long one. He did not predict that chaos would result immediately. He foresaw that it must come gradually, but that representative government was bound to lead in the end to a clashing of antipathetic interests in the State, with the balance

<sup>4</sup> This report, based on what Gordon himself said confidentially, was held by David Masson to be accurate, and Allingham’s *Diary*, p. 233, gives corroboration from Carlyle.

<sup>5</sup> *Sir George Grey, the Romance of a Proconsul*, by J. Milne, p. 123 ; *Life and Times of Sir George Grey*, by W. L. Rees, p. 403, &c., and pp. 53–87 ; *Dictionary of National Biography*, article, “ George Grey.”

falling now on one side, now on the other, and the achievements of one party swiftly nullified by the action of its opponents.

## XXVII

## DE QUINCEY AND COLERIDGE AND KANT

(1867)

DR. HUTCHISON Stirling sent an article of his in the *Fortnightly Review* dealing with 'De Quincey and Coleridge upon Kant,' and Carlyle, acknowledging it from Chelsea on 8.10.1867, agreed to its conclusion 'that neither De Quincey nor Coleridge had read anything considerable of Kant, or really *knew* anything about him at all.'

He confessed he had been reading Kant's letters lately 'with considerable weariness for most part.' To him Kant seemed to be 'in spiritual stature what he was in bodily, "not above 5 feet 2"! Essentially a *small*, most methodic, clear and nimble man;—very like that portrait in *Schubert*, I should think; the fine, sharp, cheery, honest eyes, brow, intellect; and then those projected (quizzically cautious, etc. etc.) lips, and that weak, receding, poor chin. Not an *Alles-zermalmender*' (all-grinder) 'the least in the world, but much rather a *Gar-manches-zernagender*' (or gnawer-of-many-things).<sup>1</sup> This may be true, but it is not all the truth. Kant's *Perpetual Peace* is not like the nibble of a rat, it resembles more the bark and bite of a fearless watchdog of Heaven.

## XXVIII

## ALTHAUS SEES CARLYLE AT LAST

(1867)

FRIEDRICH ALTHAUS, selected by Neuberg's sister to complete her brother's translation of *Frederick*, found that he must see Carlyle and put some questions to him connected with the work, and accordingly he called by appointment between half-past two and three o'clock on

<sup>1</sup> *James Hutchison Stirling*, by Amelia Hutchison Stirling, p. 184.

Wednesday, October 16. 'He was a big man, and ponderous, slow of speech and movement,' according to one who saw him often,<sup>1</sup> but a faithful observer and trustworthy reporter.

Carlyle came in from the garden to meet his visitor, and stood for a moment in the open doorway, 'looking at me searchingly,' says Althaus,<sup>2</sup> 'as I approached him; bowed slightly, shook hands and invited me to sit. Then he put the long pipe in his left hand on the mantelpiece and went to the window and closed it, saying, "The sun is again behind the clouds."'

To Althaus's reply that it had been 'a pleasant summer day for autumn till now' he remarked, 'Yes, such is our English weather, continually being dipped into the Gulf Stream and taken out again.'

They seated themselves at a table, and Althaus produced the maps he thought required correction; but Carlyle declared that 'the maps are perfect, being photographed from Stieler's Atlas, which is the most accurate.' He might have added that Stieler's spelling was deciphered for behoof of Larkin and the engraver by Neuberg himself.<sup>3</sup>

They then discussed a proposal made by Althaus that to the fifth volume of the German translation of *Frederick*, which was now completed, there should be added a Memoir of Neuberg. 'Carlyle seemed pleased that I had thought of such a thing,' he says, and so he asked, 'Will you not do a memoir yourself?' Carlyle answered thoughtfully, 'Neuberg was a true friend of mine. He helped me greatly in *Frederick* through his work in the State Paper Office and otherwise. He showed wonderful perseverance in going through a great mass of details without an index, fishing valuable materials out of a sea of slime. He had a forty-Raumers-power of condensation.'<sup>4</sup>

He told the story of Neuberg's life at Nottingham and Hampstead, concluding: 'Yes, it will be better if I write the Memoir. I will go on what he told me and get the dates from his sister.'

Referring again to *Frederick*, he went on: 'When I had read all the books upon him, I was in despair. From none

<sup>1</sup> F. T. Frankau, nephew of Neuberg, in a letter to D. A. W.

<sup>2</sup> *Reminiscences of Thomas Carlyle*, by Althaus, in *Unsere Zeit*, Leipzig, 1881, No. 6. Two accounts of the call are here combined, p. 831 and p. 848.

<sup>3</sup> Letter from T. C. to Neuberg, lent to D. A. W. by a nephew of Neuberg.

<sup>4</sup> The Raumers were two German savants then famous, one in history and the other, his brother, in geography and geology.

of them could I picture the man. The task appeared a huge impossibility. Still I was not willing to be conquered, and so went on with it. But these were long sad years during which I worked upon it. I would not do it again to please the whole Solar System.'

Althaus suggested that the events of 1866 must have given him satisfaction, as a sort of supplement to *Frederick*, and Carlyle agreed. 'Oh, yes, I was very glad to have that news from Germany, the best for forty years;' and he said much more which Althaus could only half understand, in a rapid low voice, 'as of quasi-soliloquy.'

Althaus found his appearance by no means what the photographs he had seen had led him to expect. 'The bushy beard was only half gray,' he reports. 'His eagle nose surprised me'—not aquiline in the least, but straight and sharp in outline—'and in the gray blue eyes there was a lightning quickness of observation instead of deep resigned melancholy.'

When Althaus left, to go back to St. John's Wood, Carlyle volunteered to accompany him for a bit of the way, but first, as Althaus had been looking at the pictures and casts in the room, he led him into the next room and pointed out a picture, 'a copy of Lucas Cranach's *Martin Luther*. It does not seem very beautiful at first,' he commented, 'but I am reconciled to it, and really believe that Cranach has done his best to paint Luther as he saw him. Without doubt, a very plebeian countenance, but besides that there is energy and force of heart, depth and insight. There never were deeper or more thoughtful eyes than these, and there never was a man with a stronger conviction of what he believed.' Then he read aloud the passage in the open Bible to which Luther's finger points.

Of a picture of Frederick which a friend had brought him from Potsdam, he mentioned that 'there they supposed it was Peter the Great!'

As they walked together, Althaus felt: 'If I did not know who he was, I'd take him for a German professor.' He wore a long black coat, old-fashioned broad linen collar and stiff, black neck-tie, and a broad-brimmed hat, and he carried a big stick in his hand. His first question as they took the road was of the part of Germany from which Althaus came. 'Lippe,' Althaus replied, and told him all he could about that little country on the Weser, between Hanover and Westphalia, including an amusing anecdote

about the Hermann Memorial to keep green the memory of Hermann, or Arminius, who destroyed Varus and his legions there, to the lasting sorrow of Augustus.

'The only other Lippe man I have known,' Carlyle told him, 'was Friedrich Rosen, the celebrated Sanskrit scholar and the first Professor of Sanskrit in London University, a talented and clever man, who unfortunately took fever and died soon after he came here.' He related also a Wallace Memorial story like the Hermann one, and perhaps in reply to questions added, 'The natural scenery of Scotland is splendid. The roar of the steam engines is unpleasant but one hears it everywhere these days. Thus in Germany I was fain to see Brunswick; but all I saw and heard of it was a big, dirty station, and men shouting,—"Brunswick, Brunswick Station!" Minden too I saw only from the outside. But such are the conditions of modern travel.'

Thereupon Althaus described his summer holiday in Wales this year, the beautiful country and the astonishing local enthusiasm of the Welsh. Carlyle laughed aloud and exclaimed, 'The Welsh are the most pathetically frivolous race I know. The English are quite different, though they do not use their fine gifts as well as they might, unfortunately.'

Speaking of Prussian historians then famous, he said: 'Preuss is learned but tiresome. Förster has knowledge but remains unintelligible, while the very learned Ranke has nothing humane in his history,—hangs it up before you like the ghost of a spider's web. Tempelhof is really good,—the best on Frederick, superabundantly circumstantial but excellent in his way. I like Köhler too, so full of facts and reliable. . . . I read what he tells of Peter's Penny lately. He leaves out nothing that is relevant, and tells a great deal that is unknown to people who talk as if they knew all there is to be known about it.'

By this time they had walked through Chelsea and Kensington into Hyde Park and arrived at the end of Rotten Row, where they had to separate.

'Good-bye,' said Carlyle, shaking hands, 'and when you have any questions whatsoever to put to me, come without any ceremony.' He walked towards Piccadilly, Althaus looking after him 'until his figure was lost in the trees.'

An hour or two later William Allingham came to Carlyle's house, and saw him in the passage when the door was opened. The servant had always to be cautious in admitting visitors, lest haply she might let in importunate strangers

unawares ; and some time had passed since Allingham had called before. Carlyle peered into the outer darkness, and, failing to recognise him, cried ' in an angry voice ' : ' Go away, sir ! I can do nothing with you.'

Away went Allingham, overwhelmed, and betook himself to Froude, with whom he had some small business to transact. To him he related how Carlyle had rebuffed him. Froude was surprised, but declared that Carlyle had ' strange moods ', an explanation not at all satisfactory to Allingham. But Froude made a point of mentioning the affair to Carlyle, and soon after Allingham's distress was removed by the receipt of a ' very kind letter from Carlyle ' <sup>5</sup> :

' Yesterday ' (October 31) ' Froude came to walk with me, . . . and just before parting . . . asked to my amazement, " *Had I turned you away abruptly in the lobby one day, when you were coming to call on me !* "

' With a shock of astonishment I answered emphatically (as was natural, and the virtual *truth*), " No, for certain, never ! "

' At length, turning the matter over, and hearing your own positive report against me, I did, and do now, well enough recollect noticing a Human Figure just about to enter under Mrs. Warren's guidance, just as I was hurrying upstairs too late for some appointment—to which Human Figure I answered hastily—not knowing it in the least, and taking it for one of the thousand impertinent Intrusives who with *others* of young genius, with Petitions, Begging letters, etc. etc., besiege my existence here when they can chance to get admission ; " I can do nothing with *you* just now ! " and pushed along as if I had managed *well*.

' That is the naked truth—and I hope, even to your sensitive imagination, *exhausts* the stupid phenomenon ;—meaning, farther or other—the phenomenon never had any.

' Nor could have ! Never can " Allingham " be turned away from this door : that day Allingham's company would have been right welcome to me as I walked up to town. Forgive my *old eyes* which no longer see clearly beyond a few yards, and with plenty of light ; for it is mathematically certain there was nothing else to blame ! . . .

' The sooner I hear that this scrap has reached you and chased the *jack-daws* out of your chimney (*mind's* chimney) it will be the better ! ' <sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *William Allingham, A Diary*, pp. 165–6.

<sup>6</sup> *Letters to William Allingham*, pp. 138–9.

## XXIX

## A LIFE OF NEUBERG

(1867)

A FEW days later, Carlyle, on horseback, left a message for Althaus inviting him to call next day,<sup>1</sup> which he did, to find Carlyle sitting at a writing table in the centre of the drawing-room, clad in his dressing-gown, with 'a high velvet cap on his head'. He greeted the visitor in a very friendly manner, thanked him for coming, and said:—

'Since we saw one another, I have spent all my time thinking of the Memoir of Neuberg. I have come to the conclusion that the fifth volume of the translation of *Frederick* is not the proper place for it to appear. It did not belong to a History of Frederick the Great. But perhaps if you have the inclination to publish a small volume of extracts he made from the State Paper Office, a Life of Neuberg would be most suitable as introduction. These notes are among his papers, and contain many fine, witty and interesting things.'

He went on to speak most gratefully of Neuberg's helpful friendship to him and the great services he had rendered. The deliberate style of speech was strangely impressive, 'more like what I expected than my first visit,' thought Althaus to himself.

'I could not have done it myself,' said Carlyle. 'The musty room in the State Paper Office, the tiresome ignorant people there, the unbearable headache I had after the first few hours,—I could not have carried it on. But Neuberg went there. He was really a ferryman for me across the Straits of the State Paper Office.'

As Althaus sat and listened, 'the room was so quiet, bright and peaceful,—there was not a trace of learned disorder, nothing on the table but the portfolio on which he had been writing, some letters and sheets of unused blotting paper. On a small table stood a portrait of Mrs. Carlyle, as if looking across at us earnestly, sympathetically. I undertook to look through Neuberg's manuscripts; and Carlyle handed to me a large packet he had ready, and accompanied me downstairs.'

On the staircase he showed Althaus an engraving Neuberg

<sup>1</sup> F. Althaus in *Unsere Zeit* of Leipzig, 1881, No. 6, pp. 835-6 and 841.

had brought him, of Frederick on parade. In a room downstairs he led him to view another engraving, of Frederick standing and talking to the aged Ziethen, whom he had made sit on a chair before him—the beautiful episode at the Palace Parade at Christmas, 1784.<sup>2</sup> He further drew Althaus's attention to the likenesses of sundry Prussian generals, and Althaus, remembering an expression that had puzzled him in translating the sixth volume of *Frederick*, asked, 'What is a "pipe-clayed little gentleman"?' Carlyle explained by word and gesture, 'drawing himself up stiffly, as straight as a candle, to show the style of the polished, finely dressed and trimmed regular soldier. To see him as if he were on a military parade was as surprising as it was remarkable. He seemed for a moment like a man from Frederick William's giant regiment. When he noticed my wonder, he burst into jolly laughter, and resumed his usual bearing. Then he drew my attention to a portrait of Goethe which Goethe himself had sent him as thanks for translating *Wilhelm Meister*, with a verse underneath in Goethe's own handwriting,' which may be translated :

If yesterday's open behind you and clear,  
 To-day you are strong, to-day you are free;  
 And doing to-day what you should without fear,  
 To-morrow as happy as ever you'll be.

So Althaus went away delighted, with a cordial invitation to return without ceremony whenever he liked, and bearing with him the packet of materials for a pleasant book about Neuberg.

### XXX

#### ON EMIGRATION

(1867)

A COPY of *Shooting Niagara* was sent to Gavan Duffy, and another to Henry Parkes with a letter of October 22, acknowledging a gift which must have crossed the pamphlet on its way. 'I am now in possession of my beautiful "Possum Rug",' Carlyle wrote, 'which I not a

<sup>2</sup> *History of Frederick*, Book XXI, Chapter V.



little admire, both as a specimen of useful peltry (probably enough "one of the *best* rugs" ever made), and on other still more human considerations, for all which kind benefits, and for the *warmth* they are all suited to yield me in their various ways, please to accept my grateful acknowledgements and the best human thanks I have. You owed me nothing for 1862, it is rather I that owed you. There are traits and words about those innocent evenings you spent with us which I shall never forget. Your face is still present to me as if I saw it; and the beautiful wise things said of you, by one whom I shall behold no more! . . .

'I had heard, long since, of your official position.' This was a reference to Parkes's appointment as President of the Council of Education, in which he was a reformer who seemed to a good judge like Robert Lowe to surpass what was done in England. 'Everybody seems to believe,' Carlyle went on, 'that whatever lies in you of real service to the colony and its best interests will be strenuously *done*. That is all that can be required of a man. . . .

'By the newspapers that came with your letter, I see what babble and bother (about Irish priests, and other *mane* objects) an official man is exposed to; like a rider on express, by village dog's barking; but he ought to ride on, as nearly as possible "all the same", with the due flourish of his whip, and (if it must be so) with the due passing salutation or lifting of the hat to said village dog, and, if possible, *arrive* before "the night" do!

'I have been greatly shocked and surprised to hear that there is now—owing to abuses of the *land law*, and to internal intrigues—next to no immigration to your huge colonial continent of late; and that your majority by count of heads don't want any! I could hardly be brought to believe it; but it was from a reporter who had evident facilities for seeing, and who had just returned from a long stay in the country. Nowhere in all my historical enquiries have I met such an instance of human meanness, short-sighted, barefaced cupidity, and total want of even the pretension to patriotism, on the part of any governing entity, plebeian or princely! King Bomba, the Grand Duke, Great Mogul, and even the King of Dahomey, may hide their diminished heads! I hope always it is not so bad as reported.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Fifty Years in the Making of Australian History*, by Henry Parkes, I, pp. 239-41; see also p. 202.

In later letters to both Parkes and Duffy, he was more explicit about emigration than about anything else, and in *Shooting Niagara* he had advanced it as the chief constructive scheme that would assist in the world's development.

'One thing I always earnestly wish,' he wrote to Duffy, 'in reference to Australia . . . that you and Mother-Country could contrive . . . ten times as much emigration. For fifty years the possibility of this, and the immensely beneficial effects of it (especially for *us*), have hung before my mind as certainties, even as axioms . . . the total neglect of which . . . fills me with astonishment, impatience, and even indignation. "Administrative Nihilism", as Huxley calls it, that is the explanation; and, alas, what Huxley does not say or quite see, Nihilism of that kind is precisely the apple that grows and must grow upon every Parliamentary tree in our day. This I at least perceive, and it quiets me on many a grievance. . . . In spite of all this, I still privately hope there is patriot honesty and probity enough on both sides of the ocean not to let the immense and noble interest sink to the sea bottom, but to save it as probably the very greatest that ever was entrusted to the guidance of a nation.'<sup>2</sup>

With the work of the gold-diggings he had little sympathy:

'He who . . . digs up a gold nugget from the ground is far inferior in beneficence to him who digs up a mealy potato . . . having actually to pick the purse of every son of Adam for what money he, the digger, gets for his nugget, and be bothered to it. I do not insist on this, I only leave it with you, and wonder silently at the ways of all-wise Providence with highly foolish man in this poor course of his.'<sup>3</sup>

On another occasion he wrote: 'A returned emigrant (newspaper editor, I think, but certainly a sensible and credible kind of man) gave me very discouraging accounts not long since of the state of *immigration* among you. "Next to *no* immigration at all," reports he; "the excellent Duffy *Land Law* made of even no effect" by scandalous "auctioneering jobbers" and other vulpine combinations and creatures, whose modes and procedures I did not well understand. But the news itself was to me extremely bad.

<sup>2</sup> *Conversations with Carlyle*, by Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, pp. 242-6.

<sup>3</sup> *My Life in Two Hemispheres*, by Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, II, pp. 336-7.

For the roaring anarchies of America itself, and of all our incipient "Americas", justify themselves to me by this one plea, "Angry sir, we couldn't help it: and we anarchies, and all (as you may see) are conquering the wilderness, as perhaps your Friedrich William, or Friedrich himself, could not have *guided* us to do, and are offering homes and arable communion with mother earth and her blessed verities to all the anarchies of the world which have quite lost their way." Australia, of a certainty, ought to leave her gates wide open in this respect at all times; nay, it were well for her could she build a free bridge ("flying bridge") between Europe and her, and encourage the deserving to stream across.<sup>4</sup>

### XXXI

#### OLD AGE AND THE HEREAFTER

(1867)

ON December 22, Carlyle soliloquised in the privacy of his Journal on old age and death, and the hereafter, a subject which in conversation he consistently avoided, or at most passed off as something on which direct information and certain knowledge were utterly impossible to man. In the farthest East they call sixty the age of obedient ears, when men willingly hear the truth; and Confucius spoke of the hereafter as the unknowable, not therefore to be enquired into by men, who had better uses for their time.

"Youth," says somebody, "is a garland of roses." I did not find it such,' Carlyle mused.<sup>1</sup> "Age is a crown of thorns." Neither is this altogether true for me. If sadness and sorrow tend to loosen us from life, they make the place of rest desirable. If incurable grief be *love* all steeped in tears, and lead us to pious thoughts and longings, is not grief an earnest blessing to us? Alas! that one is not pious always: that it is anger, bitterness, impatience, and discontent that occupies one's poor weak heart so much oftener. Some mornings ago I said to myself, "Is there

<sup>4</sup> *Conversations with Carlyle*, by Sir C. Gavan Duffy, pp. 233-4.

<sup>1</sup> Froude's *Life of Carlyle*, IV, pp. 360-2.

no book of piety you could still write? Forget the base-nesses, miseries, and abominations of this fast-sinking world—its punishment come or at hand; and dwell among the poor straggling elements of pity, of love, of awe and worship you can still discern in it! Better so. Right, surely, far better. I wish, I wish I could. Was my great grief sent to me perhaps for that end? In rare better moments I sometimes strive to entertain an imagination of that kind; but as to doing anything in consequence, alas! alas! . . .

‘The last stage of life’s journey is necessarily dark, sad, and carried on under steadily increasing difficulties. We are alone; all our loved ones and cheering fellow-pilgrims gone. Our strength is failing, wasting more and more; day is sinking on us; night coming, not metaphorically only. The road, to our growing weakness, dimness, injurability of every kind, becomes more and more obstructed, intricate, difficult to feet and eyes; a road among brakes and brambles, swamps and stumbling places; no welcome *shine* of a *human* cottage with its hospitable candle now alight for us in these waste solitudes. Our eyes, if we have any light, rest only on the eternal stars. Thus we stagger on, impediments increasing, force diminishing, till at length there is equality between the terms, and we do all infallibly *arrive*. So it has been from the beginning; so it will be to the end—forever a mystery and miracle before which the human intellect falls *dumb*. Do we reach those *stars* then? Do we sink in those swamps amid the dance of dying dreams? Is the threshold we step over but the *brink* in that instance, and our *home* thenceforth an infinite Inane? God, our Eternal Maker, alone knows, and it shall be as He wills, not as we would. His mercy be upon us! What a natural human aspiration!’

In a letter to Erskine some months earlier, conveying his sympathy to his old friend who had lost his sister Mrs. Stirling, Carlyle’s ‘friendliest of Hostesses’ on his Rectorial visit to Edinburgh, and who had now suffered another bereavement in the loss of his other sister, Mrs. Paterson, he concludes, musing:

‘It is the saddest feature of old age, that the old man has to see himself daily grow more lonely; reduced to commune with the inarticulate Eternities, and the Loved Ones now unresponsive who have preceded him thither. Well, well; there is a blessedness in this too if we take it well. There is a grandeur in it, if also an *extent* of sombre

sadness, which is new to one ; nor is hope quite wanting,—nor the clear conviction that those whom *we* would most screen from sore pain and misery are now safe and at rest. It lifts one to real kinship withal, *real* for the first time in this scene of things. Courage, my friend ; let us endure patiently and act piously, to the end.'

## XXXII

## TALKS WITH FROUDE

(1868)

ON January 1, Carlyle wrote to his sister Mary : ' Jean is here, and makes the solitary House a little less gaunt and gloomy for me.' She remained with him until March, when she proceeded home by way of Liverpool, ' where her son Jim (who is a clever solid fellow and has got promotion in Liverpool) is just *setting up house* with his sister Maggie as Manageress.' After she had left, he felt ' entirely lonesome, and for the time gloomier than ever ; but expect to get *used* to it again, and perhaps be steadier and busier.'

He continued to find too much company uncongenial, and was best when left to himself. On March 17 he was '*wiled* to dinner at Dean Stanley's (frightful Dinner of Lions and of Princes),—and *got* almost *nothing* to "dine" upon, drank tea here at midnight, etc.'

He fell into the habit of walking often with Froude, who was repeatedly struck by instances of his generosity, often accompanied by well-meant advice or censure. ' Even the imps of the gutter he would not treat as reprobates.' He would remonstrate with them, quietly, and enhance the value of his lecture with a welcome sixpence. For the deserving poor he displayed a genuine respect, as for instance the old man, over eighty, who had refused parish relief and as long as he was able trundled his barrow of cheap crockery about the Chelsea streets. Other points that impressed Froude were his extraordinary memory, and his encyclopædic knowledge, ranging over a vast assortment of subjects. His grasp of literature, English, French, German, and Italian, eclipsed Macaulay's, and further, when he had found something arresting in an author he went on to learn

all that was available about him, in order to have the fullest possible knowledge and understanding of him.

He was utterly indifferent to money, and to material promotion. Worldly advancement he regarded as desirable only because it increased a man's 'chance of wider usefulness.' Facts he revered above all else, and speculation he regarded as vain. A man's paramount duty was to study his sphere of greatest usefulness, and apply himself to it, in the sure knowledge that if he did so well, without thought of self, the rest would be 'added unto him.'

'His excuse for his own life,' Froude tells us, 'was that there had been no alternative. Sometimes he spoke of his writings as having a certain value; generally, however, as if they had little, and now and then as if they had none. . . . A strange judgment to come from a man who has exerted so vast an influence by writing alone.'

### XXXIII

#### A NIGGER SERMON

(1868)

'OH what a Balaklava is this English time and world in general,' Carlyle cried, writing to Lady Ashburton at Mentone in the first week of March, 1868<sup>1</sup>; 'and what tragedies are done by it, vile muddy chaos, on the heavenliest souls, and the capabilities that God has given them: 50,000 poor soldiers rotted in the midst of it, these (after all) are but a small item of the great tragedy!—I will follow these thoughts no farther. I am in the middle of the *Battle of Striegau*; very ill off indeed;—but do get, out of these waste Prussian dust-vortexes, a kind of perpetual monition, "Be you also *drilled*, to the right pitch; and stand to your arms, or——!" Which is probably the best result to be derived from flinging away one's life into them in this sad manner.

'I commend you to the bright Spring Sun, and to every good Genius of the Universe.'

He also enclosed a newspaper cutting still worth reading. 'Here is the Nigger Sermon; can be read tomorrow morning over breakfast, and then burnt.'

<sup>1</sup> Postmarks on envelope.

## A NEGRO'S DESCRIPTION OF THE FIRST SIN

A 'Duncan Falls' correspondent, writing to us from Mansfield, Ohio, sends us the following 'Coloured Discourse,' for 'the entire authenticity of which he vouches without reserve,' having taken it down from the thick lips of the reverend orator himself:—"My tex', bruderen and sisteren, will be foun' in de fus' chapter ob Ginesis and de twenty-seben verse, "So de Lor' make man just like Hese'f." Now my bruderen, you see dat in de beginnin' ob de worl' de Lor' make Adam. I tole you *how* He make him: He make 'im out ob clay, and He sot 'im on a board, and He look at him, an' he say, "Furs-rate!" an' when he get dry, He brethe in 'im de breff ob life. He put him in de garden ob Eden, and He sot 'im in one corner ob de lot, an' he told him to eat all de apples, 'ceptin' dem in de middle ob de orchard: dem He wanted for de winter apples. By-me-by Adam he got lonesome. So de Lor' make Ebe. I tole you *how* He make her. He gib Adam lodlom, till he get sound 'sleep; den He gouge a rib out de side and make Ebe; and He sot Ebe in de corner ob de garden, an' He tole her to eat all de apples 'ceptin' dem in de middle ob de orchard; dem He want for winter apples. Wun day de Lor' go out a-visitin': de debbil come along: he dress heself in de skin ob de snake, and he find Ebe; and he tole her, "Ebe! why for you no eat de apple in de middle ob de orchard?" Ebe say, "Dem de Lor's winter apples." But de debble say, "I tole you for to eat dem, 'case deys de best apples in de orchard." So Ebe eat de apple, an' gib Adam a bite; an' de debble go away. By-me-by de Lor' come home, an' He miss de winter apples; an' He call, "Adam! you Adam!" Adam he lay low: so de Lor' call again, "You Adam!" Adam say, "Heah, Lor'," and de Lor' say, "Who stole de winter apples?" Adam tole Him he don't know—Ebe, he expec'! So de Lor' call, "Ebe!" Ebe she lay low: de Lor' call again, "You Ebe!" Ebe say, "Heah, Lor'." De Lor' say, "Who stole de winter apples?" Ebe tole Him she don't know—Adam, she expec'! So de Lor' cotch 'em boff and He trow dem ober de fence, an' He tole 'em, "Go work for your libin'!" ' ' ' Isn't that negro all over?

—KNICKERBOCKER.

## XXXIV

## FRIENDS COMING OUT OF THE DARK

(1868)

ON Saturday morning, March 22, two men came to 5, Cheyne Row, with a letter of introduction from one of Carlyle's most intimate friends,<sup>1</sup> seemingly 'one of the Russells.'<sup>2</sup> They were father and son, William White, a former bookseller in Bedford, but since 1850 the doorkeeper of the House of Commons, and W. Hale White, a civil servant of the age of 38, and in years to come the novelist 'Mark Rutherford', who as a divinity student of 20 wrote to Carlyle in 1850 about the *Latter-day Pamphlets*.<sup>3</sup>

They were taken upstairs at once to where Carlyle was breakfasting in the library,<sup>1</sup> where the future Mark Rutherford remarked the bright fire and the well-lit and well-aired room, with the portrait of Frederick and another picture which Carlyle pointed out, 'a portrait of the Elector of Saxony who assisted Luther', with the initials 'V. D. M. I. Æ.'<sup>4</sup> inscribed round it. (See *History of Frederick*, Book III, Chapter V.)

Two more genuine or modest disciples never stood before Carlyle than this old man and his son, and he appreciated this at a glance, and treated them with great frankness. The younger White soon produced the letter of 1850, whose advice to *practise* what he saw to be true, and learn to do without sympathy, he had followed gladly, and upon which he had prospered.

'It is what I have always believed, ever since I was at college,' Carlyle said. 'I do not mean to say that I was not loved there as warmly by noble friends as ever man could be, but the world tumbled on me, and has ever since then been tumbling on me rubbish, huge wagon-loads of rubbish, thinking to smother me, and was surprised it did not smother me—turned round with amazement and said, "What, you alive yet?"' While I was writing my *Frederick* my best friends, out of delicacy, did not call. I saw very few of . . . those who came. I shook off everything to right and left. At last the work would have killed me, and

<sup>1</sup> *Pages from a Journal*, by Mark Rutherford, pp. 1-13.

<sup>2</sup> *The Early Life of Mark Rutherford*, by himself, W. Hale White, p. 35.

<sup>3</sup> See Book XVIII, Chapter XIV (Carlyle at his Zenith).

<sup>4</sup> 'Verbum Dei Manet in Æternum.'



I was obliged to take to riding, chiefly in the dark, about fourteen miles most days, plunging and floundering on. I ought to have been younger to have undertaken such a task. If they were to offer me all Prussia, all the solar system, I would not write *Frederick* again. No bribe from God or man would tempt me to do it.'

The visitors had found him re-reading *Frederick*, to correct it for the stereotyped edition.

'On the whole,' he remarked, 'I think it is very well done. No man perhaps in England could have done it better. If you write a book though now, you must just pitch it out of window and say, "Ho! all you jackasses, come and trample on it and trample it into mud, or go on till you are tired." ' So saying, he laughed loud. After a while he went on, when the conversation turned to Germany, 'No piece of news of late years has gladdened me like the victory of the Prussians over the Austrians. It was the triumph of Prussian over French and Napoleonic influence. The Prussians were a valiant, pious people, and it was a question which should have the most power in Germany, they or Napoleon. The French are sunk in all kinds of filth. Compare what the Prussians did with what we did in the Crimea. The English people are an incredible people. They seem to think that it is not necessary that a general should have the least knowledge of the art of war. It is as if you had the stone, and should cry out to any travelling tinker or blacksmith and say, "Here, come here and cut me for the stone," and he *would* cut you! Sir Charles Napier would have been a great general if he had had the opportunity. He was much delighted with Frederick. "Frederick was a most extraordinary general," said Sir Charles, and on examination I found that all that Sir Charles had read of Frederick was a manual for Prussian officers, published 1760.'

Old Mr. White's position naturally led the talk round to the House of Commons, and Carlyle remarked: 'Sir John Bowring was one of your model men; men who go about imagining themselves the models of all virtues, and they are models of something very different. He was one of your patriots, and the Government to quiet him sent him out to China. When he got there he went to war with a third of the human race! He, the patriot, he who believed in the greatest-happiness principle, immediately went to war with a third of the human race!' He broke into a

great laugh, and added : ‘ And so far as I can make out, he was all wrong.’

He was indeed—as anyone can see who reads the history of European iniquity in China.

The conversation returned to Germany, and Carlyle spoke of the translation of *Frederick*, and of Neuberg : ‘ I could not work in the offices where lay the State papers I wanted to use, it brought on such a headache, but Neuberg went there, and for six months worked all day copying. He was taken ill, and a surgical operation was badly performed, and then in that wild, black weather at the beginning of last year, just after I came back from Mentone, the news came to me one night he was dead.’

‘ Carlyle was perfectly frank,’ Mr. Hale White comments on this interview, ‘ even to us, of whom he knew but little. He did not stand off or refuse to talk on any but commonplace subjects. What was offered to us was his best. And yet there is in him a singular reserve, and those who taunt him with inconsistency because he makes so much of silence, and yet talks so much, understand little of him. In half a dozen pages one man may be guilty of shameless garrulity, and another may be nobly reticent throughout a dozen volumes. . . . It has been said that Carlyle is great because he is graphic. But . . . he is graphic by ability to penetrate into essence. . . .’

‘ Carlyle is infinitely tender. That is what struck me as I sat and looked in his eyes. Much of his fierceness is an inverted tenderness.’

At parting, he shook hands, and declared he was glad to have seen them. ‘ It is pleasant to have friends coming out of the dark in this way,’ he concluded.

### XXXV

#### THE HISTORIAN OF RATIONALISM

(1868)

**I**N March, too, good lanky Lecky, a belated admirer of Burke and Macaulay yet withal a very shrewd man, became the companion of many ‘ very long walks’ with Carlyle,<sup>1</sup> which developed into a regular habit when he

<sup>1</sup> *Memoir of W. E. H. Lecky*, by his wife, pp. 54, 57, 75, 92, &c.

settled in London. Three years before, Lecky had produced, in spite of his youth, a remarkably fine *History of Rationalism in Europe*, which he defined as the habit of subordinating theology to reason and conscience. He was now completing his thirtieth year, and far advanced with a history of our 'Morals' too. He 'talked in a high-pitched monotone',<sup>2</sup> and as they walked together made Carlyle look small, overtopping him and bending towards him in speaking and listening.<sup>3</sup>

Although he soon was telling Allingham that he 'seldom if ever agreed' with Carlyle,<sup>3</sup> he was gladdened by hearing his own sentiments better expressed about Comte, whom Carlyle called 'the ghastliest algebraic factor that ever was taken for a man.'<sup>1</sup>

'A good deal of walking,' Lecky said once, 'I always enjoy much except in London.'

'Why,' Carlyle retorted, 'there's nowhere in the world that you can get such walking as in London—fifty miles of broad well-lighted pavement.'

Lecky modestly called this 'a snub' in reporting it, but he soon became devoted to Carlyle, and an almost weekly visitor at Cheyne Row for the rest of the time that both were in London. Carlyle described him as 'a very friendly polite man', and although he did once in the freedom of talk in Lecky's absence say he was 'graminivorous',<sup>4</sup> he hastened to add,<sup>5</sup>—'But Lecky would be very sorry to hear that from me,' and so did not wish it to be repeated.

In April Carlyle went for a short visit to Stratton Park,— 'a big, big House with a very few people in it', as he wrote to his brother John, and he went riding with Lord Northbrook to 'have a look at the Grange'. One of the company at Stratton Park was Lord Sidney Godolphin Osborne, whom he described to his brother as 'very easy to live with, ingenious, versatile, half-clever, and the most perfect speci[men of '6] this intellectual and ecclesiastico-Aristocratic God I have ever seen. A tall very lean long-legged man of about your age; handsome aristocratic face, black bright eyes, and heap of grey hair;—talks incessantly and saves you all the trouble on that score.'

Dr. John was bound for Vichy, but it was impossible for

<sup>2</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 19.10.1920.

<sup>3</sup> W. Allingham, *A Diary*, pp. 241 and 177.

<sup>4</sup> As published by John, Lord Morley, in a speech quoted to Sir C. Gavan Duffy in 1897.

<sup>5</sup> Sir C. Gavan Duffy to D. A. W.

<sup>6</sup> MS. partly erased.

Carlyle to accompany him. The journey, the break in routine, the probable irregularity of hours and meals, and the certainty of disturbing noises, made such an expedition seem out of the question. In any case, when he returned to Chelsea he had sufficient to occupy him. As he reported to Jean, on May 18, he was very much 'bothered and jumbled, getting that "*Library Edition*" set afloat. Once *afloat* it will have to go on, I compute, for about 3 years before it quite end! Whether I shall ever see *it* end, may well be a question; but I am willing to take some charge and "set my house in order" there too, so long as I am continued in it.'

## XXXVI

## SIR GEORGE GREY HOME

(1868)

IN 1868 Sir George Grey returned to London from New Zealand, where he had been Governor. Successful in the public interest, he 'had not truckled to Downing Street', and for that reason had been recalled as soon as it was thought safe. In his simplicity he was surprised to find that the official intention was to make him docile by keeping him idle and poor.<sup>1</sup> He began to look around him at home, remaining in England until 1870, and he soon discovered that Disraeli was minded to keep colonial governorships as a prerogative of the Peerage, but was willing to 'find him a seat in Parliament.'

'I declined with thanks,' Grey said. 'I should have been in revolt almost before I had taken my seat.' He devoted himself to preaching on the text of *Latter-Day Pamphlets* against cutting away the colonies, and thereby infuriated the politicians. He tried the Opposition, but the Caucus had no use for such as he,—he was too Radical for Gladstonian Liberals, who cared as little for the colonies as the Conservatives or Disraeli himself.

It may have been about this time that he was often walking in Carlyle's company, and part of one conversation is recorded. He may have been telling how Bishop Selwyn, weeping for the death of the converted Maori, Siapo, had

<sup>1</sup> *Sir George Grey*, by W. L. & L. Rees, II, pp. 420-1, 455, &c.

said to him: 'You have not shed a single tear.'—'No,' Sir George replied—he was as simple a Christian as Cromwell himself—'I have been thinking of . . . the kingdom of Heaven . . . the wonder and joy there at the coming of Siapo, the first Christian of his race!' Something of this sort it must have been which made old Carlyle stop and lay his hand on Sir George's shoulder and look him in the face and exclaim: 'Oh, that I could believe like you!' <sup>2</sup> The humour of the situation did not need a smile.

The presence of Sir George in England at this time was instrumental in saving New Zealand from what might very well have been a gigantic misfortune. When news arrived of another Maori outbreak, the Horse Guards and Colonial Office, instigated they say by Sir Bartle Frere, who saw good business for Indian Police in New Zealand's difficulty, decided to suspend the constitution and send out General Gordon as Military Dictator; but before gazetting the blunder they consulted Grey, as a matter of prudence, and Grey for his part was 'so very absurd' as to think of nothing but the public interest, and actually told them that they were going to do wrong. He was unpardonable—all the more so because they had to take his advice.<sup>3</sup>

Grey shared at least in part Carlyle's often-expressed opinion of the politician.

Allingham records in his *Diary* <sup>4</sup> an interesting incident, and the conversation that ensued, when he called on Carlyle on June 8. On the doorstep they found Sir Charles Dilke and Hepworth Dixon 'come to solicit Carlyle's vote for the former. C. does not ask them in, and on hearing their errand declares briefly, "I never gave a vote in my life," whereupon they depart.' During the walk that followed, Carlyle talked to Allingham of Parliament and its absurdity, and 'how foolish' it was 'for any man to desire to sit night after night for many hours in an ill-ventilated room, listening to the most tedious stuff.'

'He said in shaking hands,' adds Allingham, more than a little distressed, "'You won't walk many more times with me," which made me sad.'

<sup>2</sup> *Sir George Grey, the Romance of a Proconsul*, by J. Milne, pp. 161 and 99.

<sup>3</sup> *Sir George Grey*, by W. L. & L. Rees, II, pp. 424-7.

<sup>4</sup> P. 182.

## XXXVII

THE COMMON BEDROCK OF SCIENCE AND  
RELIGION

(1868)

IT was probably in the course of one of his walks with Leslie Stephen that Carlyle quoted with admiration Pope's 'Universal Prayer'.<sup>1</sup> His journal shows the right way of thinking, articulated in *Sartor*, ratified by the experiences of a long life spent in studying realities past and present.

'One was bragging to me the other day,' he noted on June 8, 'that surely, for an item of progress, there was a visibly growing contempt for titles, aristocratic and other. I answered him yes, indeed; and a visible decay of respect or reverence for whatever is above one's own paltry self, up and up to the top of the universe even, up to Almighty God Himself even, if you will look well, which is a more frightful kind of "progress" for you.

'Seriously the *speed* with which matters are going on in this supreme province of our affairs is something notable, and sadly undeniable in late years. The name . . . has become as if obsolete to the most devout of us; and it is, to the huge idly impious million of writing, preaching, and talking people as if the *fact* too had quite ceased to be certain. "The Eternities", "the Silences", &c. I myself have tried various shifts to avoid mentioning the "Name" to such an audience—audience which merely sneers in return—and is more convinced of its delusion than ever. "No more humbug!" "Let us go ahead!" "All descended from gorillas, seemingly." "Sun made by collision of huge masses of planets, asteroids, &c., in the infinite of space." Very possibly say I! "Then where is the place for a Creator?" The *fool* hath said in his heart there is no God. From the beginning it has been so, is now, and to the end will be so. The *fool* hath said it—he and nobody else; and with dismal results in our days—as in all days; which often makes me sad to think of, coming nearer myself and the end of my own life than I ever expected they would do. That of the sun, and his possibly being made in that

<sup>1</sup> *English Literature and Society in the 18th Century*, by Leslie Stephen, p. 115 (Ford Lectures, 1903).

manner, seemed to me a real triumph of science, indefinitely widening the horizon of our *theological* ideas withal, and awakened a good many thoughts in me when I first heard of it, and gradually perceived that there was actual scientific basis for it—I suppose the finest stroke that “Science”, poor creature, has or may have succeeded in making during my time—welcome to me if it be a truth—honourably welcome! But what has it to do with the existence of the Eternal Unnameable? Fools! fools! It widens the horizon of my imagination, fills me with deeper and deeper wonder and devout awe.

‘No prayer, I find, can be more appropriate still to express one’s feelings, ideas, and wishes in the highest direction than that universal one of Pope:—

“Father of all! in every age,  
In every clime adored,  
By saint, by savage, and by sage,  
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord!

Thou great First Cause, least *understood*,  
Who all my sense confined,  
To know but this, that Thou art good,  
And that myself am blind.”

‘Not a word of that requires change for me at this time if words are to be used at all. The first devout or nobly thinking soul that found himself in this unfathomable universe—I still fancy with a strange sympathy the first insight his awe-struck meditation gave him in this matter. “The Author of all this is not omnipotent only, but infinite in wisdom, in rectitude, in all noble qualities. The name of him is God (the good).” How else is the matter construable to this hour? All that is good, generous, wise, *right*—whatever I deliberately and for ever love in others and myself, who or what could by any possibility have given it to me but One who first *had* it to give! This is not logic. This is axiom. Logic to and fro beats against this, like idle wind on an adamant rock. The antique first-thinker naturally gave a human personality and type to this supreme object, yet admitted too that in the deepest depths of his anthropomorphism, it remained “inconceivable”, “past finding out”. Let us cease to *attempt* shaping it, but at no moment forget that it veritably *is*—in this day as in the first of the days.’

The intuition thus made, the foundation of faith is really

the same as what is taken for granted in scientific reasoning—that there is no effect without a cause, and nothing comes from nothing. No one disputes thus of matter and motion; it is equally true of life and thought, if not so easy to see. Honest Charles Darwin recognised that the ‘chief argument’ for God was ‘the impossibility of conceiving that this grand and wondrous universe, with our conscious selves, arose through chance.’<sup>2</sup>

‘It was as a ray of everlasting light and insight this,’ Carlyle’s journal runs on, ‘that had shot itself *zenithward* from the soul of a man, first of all truly “thinking” men, struggling to interpret for himself the mystery of his as yet utterly dark and unfathomable world; the *beginning* of all true interpretation, a piece of insight that could never die out of the world henceforth. Strange, high, and true to me as I consider it and figure it to myself in those strange newest days—first real aperture made through the utter darkness, revealing far aloft strange skies and infinitudes. “Inspired by the Almighty,” men might well think. What else is it in all times that “giveth men understanding”! This “*aperture zenithwards*”, as I like to express it, has gone on slowly widening itself, with troubling and confusings of itself sad to witness, even now. But it has steadily gone on, and is essentially, under conditions ever widening, our *faith*, capable of being believed by oneself alone against the whole world, this day and to the end of days.

‘Poor “Comtism”, ghastliest of algebraic spectralities—origin of evil, etc.—these are things which, much as I have struggled with the mysteries surrounding me, never broke a moment of my rest. Mysterious! be it so if you will. But is not the fact clear and certain! Is it a “mystery” you have the least chance of ever getting to the bottom of? Canst *thou* by searching find out God? I am not surprised thou canst *not*, vain fool.

‘If they do abolish “God” from their own poor bewildered hearts, all or most of them, there will be seen for some length of time (perhaps for several generations) such a world as few are dreaming of. But I never dread their “abolition” of what is the *Eternal Fact of Facts*, and can prophesy that mankind generally will either *return* to that with new clearness and sacred purity of zeal, or else perish utterly in unimaginable depths of anarchic misery and baseness, i.e. sink to hell and death eternal,

<sup>2</sup> Charles Darwin, by Francis Darwin, I, p. 306.



as our fathers said. For the rest I can rather welcome one symptom clearly traceable in the phenomenon, viz., that all people have *awoke* and are determined to have done with cant and idolatries, and have decided to die rather than live longer under that hatefullest and brutallest of sleepy Upas trees. *Euge! euge!* to begin with. And there is another thing I notice, that the chosen few who do continue to believe in the "eternal nature of duty", and are in all times and all places the God-appointed *rulers* of this world, will know at once who the *slave* kind are; who, if good is ever to begin, must be *excluded* totally from ruling, and, in fact, be trusted only with some kind of collars round their necks. Courage! courage always! But how deep are we to go? Through how many centuries, how many abject generations will it probably last?'

He added soon afterwards: 'If people are only driven upon virtuous conduct, duty, etc., by association of ideas, and there is no "Infinite Nature of Duty", the world, I should say, had better "count its spoons" to begin with, and look out for hurricanes and earthquakes to end with'—such hurricanes and earthquakes, as, for example, tortured the earth in 1914-18.

## XXXVIII

## MORAL PHILOSOPHY IN EDINBURGH

(1868)

WHILE Carlyle was still Rector of Edinburgh University, he learned that the seven electors who had to choose a new Professor of Moral Philosophy were likely to decide in favour of a Glasgow preacher unprejudiced by any special knowledge of the subject, in preference to Dr. Hutchison Stirling, to whom he had previously given a very generous and well-merited testimonial. He accordingly sent Stirling a letter to be shown to an ex-M.P. reputed to hold the deciding vote, and to any others who might be influenced.

'To what I have said already,' he wrote, 'I . . . add that I think you not only the one man in Britain capable of bringing metaphysical philosophy, in the ultimate, German or European, and highest actual form of it, distinctly home

to the understanding of British men who wish to understand it ; but that I notice in you further, on the moral side, a sound strength of intellectual discernment, a noble valour and reverence of mind, which seems to me to mark you out as the man capable of doing us the highest service in ethical science too ; that of restoring, or decisively beginning to restore, the doctrine of morals to what I must ever reckon is one true and everlasting basis (namely, the divine or supra-sensual one), and thus of victoriously reconciling and rendering identical the latest dictates of modern science with the earliest dawns of wisdom among the race of men. This is truly my opinion, and how important to me, not for the sake of Edinburgh University alone, but for the whole world for ages to come, I need not say to you.'

However, as Carlyle must have known from past experience, appointments of this nature seldom if ever go by merit, and the last consideration heeded would be genuine qualifications. The ex-M.P. was 'deeply shaken, but confessed himself "committed to another".' The letter was otherwise used too ; but in vain. The preacher got the job ; and Carlyle could only approve of what the Edinburgh newspapers were then discussing, an arrangement to keep the 'ordinaries' or regular professors 'awake' by a system of extramural Chairs in other subjects as well as medicine. But the Universities were controlled by the professors ; and nothing was done.<sup>1</sup>

In a month or two came a letter of enquiry from Professor Bowen of Harvard College, to ask if Hutchison Stirling was willing to become an American citizen if appointed Professor of Metaphysics there. Carlyle congratulated him,—'This voice from New England is a sufficient triumph over the ditto from the Edinburgh Bailies, if you needed any. . . . America, with all her world-anarchies, is without that special one of dirty puddling Bailies of the Free kirk of Slave kirk type, set to decide on the highest Philosophic interests of their country !'

He counselled as desired in great detail, explaining whatever he knew about America that was likely to be useful in assisting Hutchison Stirling to a decision ; but before the year was out the offer was 'indefinitely postponed' because of 'many changes', which delivered the doctor from the difficulty of deciding 'yes' or 'no.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *James Hutchison Stirling*, by Amelia Hutchison Stirling, pp. 205-11.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 212-19.

## XXXIX

## ON SHOES AND SHOEMAKERS

(1868)

ADDICTED as he was to frequent and long walks over the hard pavements of Chelsea, Carlyle had suffered often from the evils of imperfectly fitting shoes. 'Poor Carlyle!', wrote Mrs. Pollock to Henry Taylor, on 17.6.1867. 'He could talk of nothing but the iniquity of the shoemaking trade. He had suffered from the torture of the boot (that favourite torture of James II), and his little toe was in miserable condition. He talked of it tenderly and sorrowfully, summing up with this sentence, that "there was no remedy for this intolerable evil, this great shoemaking sham, but the immediate intervention of the great axe, and that a general decapitation, swift and sure, of all shoemakers was the only remedy for the persecuted shoewearers." On this, I reminded him that Robespierre did send to the guillotine a wretched tailor for making his coat-sleeves too short.'

Percy FitzGerald reports<sup>1</sup> that he heard Carlyle 'descant on the decay of shoemaking', and he quotes a letter of Carlyle's written on 10.7.1868 to 'Mr. Dowie, Boot and Shoe Maker, Charing Cross':

'DEAR SIR,

'Not for your own sake alone, but for that of a public suffering much in its *feet*, I am willing to testify that you have yielded me complete and unexpected relief in that particular; and, in short, on trial after trial, that you seem to me to possess, in singular contrast to so very many of your brethren, the actual *art of making shoes which are easy to the wearer*. My thanks to you are emphatic and sincere.'

Mr. Dowie naturally made good use of this letter in his business. A skilful shoemaker working thereabouts then and for many years afterwards explained the matter by reporting<sup>2</sup> that Dowie had learned his trade in the north, and in consequence knew better than any London-bred shoemaker the sort of thing that would satisfy Carlyle—a shoe that would pass unnoticed in a drawing-room and yet be comfortable for long and arduous walks; but the great

<sup>1</sup> *Recreations of a Literary Man*, by P. FitzGerald, I, pp. 185-6.

<sup>2</sup> Frederick Thomas, Little Queen Street, to D. A. W., 1883-4.

majority of customers who had shoes made to order were 'carriage folks' not accustomed to walking any distance, which tends to make the feet swell; they required therefore shoes that fitted like a glove, but would become too tight if their wearer were to walk much.

Carlyle wore boots sometimes, according to his niece, Miss Mary Carlyle Aitken, but he preferred shoes.

## XL

## MORE SITTINGS TO WATTS

(1868)

'ON Friday,' Carlyle wrote on 20.5.1868, 'I am to give Watts his "first sittings" (sorrow on it).' He was impatient of the hours of concentrated inactivity they involved, which may explain the opinion of the painter that he expressed ten days later: 'He is to me a very wearisome, "washed-out", dilettante man,—though an innocent well-intending and ingenious withal.' He was apt to be bored by the attempts Watts made while he worked to lead his sitter to a proper appreciation of his art.

Watts, in fact, was supremely conscientious, could not please himself, and was losing heart. It seemed impossible to obtain a likeness that would capture more than a fleeting glimpse of his subject's many-sided and mercurial nature.

'I am specially unfitted to paint a portrait,' he wrote, in his discouragement, refusing a commission for another while engaged on Carlyle. He made three fresh starts and finished two of the pictures,<sup>1</sup> but always looked upon them as failures. As yet he had shown nothing. 'There was much mystification,' said Carlyle, impatiently, 'and screens were drawn round the easel, and curtains were drawn, and I was not allowed to see anything.'<sup>2</sup> He was 'a submissive sitter', the artist admitted, and to apologies for delay he answered doggedly: 'I said I would sit, and so I will do so!'<sup>1</sup>

At last, in July, 1868, the patient wrote: 'Unexpectedly I find I have to go to Scotland in about ten days, and continue there I know not how long. If you do want me again, therefore, let it be within that time, fairly within; I am

<sup>1</sup> *George Frederic Watts*, by M. S. Watts, I, pp. 247-9, and II, p. 232.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Whistler*, by J. & E. R. Pennell, I, pp. 170-1.

anxious to neglect nothing for perfecting our mutual enterprise, in which I see in you such excellent desire after excellence, and shall be ready within the prescribed limits and times, any time at a day's notice.'

So Watts concluded his work. The screens were put aside; a finished portrait stood upon the easel.

'How do you like it?' he asked, anxiously.

Carlyle looked at it and was silent. Praise was impossible and blame would have been rude. At last he turned to Watts and cried, 'Man, I would have ye know I am in the habit of wearing clean linen!'<sup>2</sup>

But his words were not prompted by ignorance of the commonplaces about white linen in portraiture. He had to convey his disappointment as gently as he could—and to spare the painter's feelings by appearing ignorant was a refinement of courtesy. But to others, pressing for a more explicit opinion, he seems to have said that he was 'made to look like a mad labourer.' It is impossible to believe that he said so to Watts.

He wrote to his brother that Forster was 'much content', but that to himself it seemed 'insufferable . . . a delirious-looking mountebank full of violence, awkwardness, atrocity and stupidity, without recognisable likeness. . . . The fault of Watts is a passionate pursuit of strength.' This letter was cruelly published while Watts was still alive; but that cannot be laid to the blame of its writer. Watts, indeed, was aware of that and bore no malice.

He succeeded better with Tennyson, and his widow reports a pleasant talk in 1893 with George Meredith, who said, 'Tennyson was the most natural, the most spontaneously natural, of human beings. So was Carlyle, though perhaps less direct. He had the look of Lear encountering the storm on the Kentish coast. You have given him that look in your portrait,' he went on to insist, in spite of Watts's disclaimers, and with considerable truth as well as courtesy.

We are apt to expect too much from a picture. It can only give colour and shape, and can at most by happy accident suggest the soul which passes through the material form like electricity through the wires. The most successful portrait remains the peg of an optical delusion in the minds' eyes of the onlookers. The finest artist can fix only one expression, and the one that Watts has caught was of Carlyle entangled by his arguments and encountering a blast of 'studio talk' to whose language he was alien.

## XLI

## VISIT TO SCOTLAND

(1868)

I T was probably on the occasion of the visit to Scotland just mentioned that Carlyle travelled by sea, and had as a fellow-passenger a middle-aged Scot, William Johnstone, the commercially successful agent of Messrs. Bryant and May, who dealt in matches. He gave his leisure mainly to music and art, attending concerts diligently, and from time to time afflicting his wife with a new picture to hang ; but he was not much addicted to reading. He knew a little about *Sartor*, and had also had some experience of modern Germany ; but it was from photographs and pictures and the newspapers mainly that he felt familiar with Carlyle, and foresaw an unusually entertaining voyage as soon as he heard he was to be on board. ' I recognised him at the first look,' he used to say, ' by his big cliff of a face.'

One or two meals in the saloon must have preceded an incident which he was ever after fond of relating, and should be remembered as throwing some light upon it. Carlyle could hardly fail to notice Johnstone, who waited patiently until he saw him alone in the moonlight sitting upon a coil of rope, and observed that his companion had gone below. He accordingly approached and sought to break the ice with a penetrating remark.

' It is a lovely evening.'

' Yes,' said Carlyle.

' I see you are a smoker as well as myself.'

' Yes,' said Carlyle.

' I have some very fine cigars here,' the other went on, in his most pleasing professional style. ' Would you allow me to offer you one? '

' No,' said Carlyle.

The agent for matches slowly edged away, and till his death long afterwards—in 1899—might have been heard describing this dialogue, and concluding : ' I can at any rate say I drew out of him the Everlasting Yea and the Everlasting Nay.'<sup>1</sup>

Johnstone's experience was a common one. Carlyle

<sup>1</sup> Reported to D. A. W. by a credible lady who gave evidence of W. J.'s accuracy.

knew perfectly well why strangers approached him—real interest in some cases, idle curiosity or a desire for reflected glory in many others; he probably did not regard their overtures as rude or impertinent, he simply was indifferent. All his life he had been in the habit of musing deeply when alone, so deeply in fact that he was often unaware of being spoken to, and was known to have passed by close friends, even relatives, without seeing them.

It was probably on this same voyage, certainly in similar circumstances, that the Rev. Mr. Bannatyne, a dissenting clergyman from Bothwell in Lanarkshire, and a stranger to Carlyle, spent many hours walking the deck in his company, in pleasant conversation that made the voyage one of the events of his life.<sup>2</sup>

The journey to Scotland was undertaken primarily in order to have medical treatment for a minor ailment, and for a fortnight or more he went to live with Professor Syme in his 'beautiful house of Millbank in the southern suburb' of Edinburgh. The Professor was proud of his patient, and insisted on having him as a guest during treatment; he was at pains, too, to avoid any annoyance to his distinguished old patient by importunate visitors, and his presence there was not divulged except to close friends. But a little dinner party was given, when Carlyle was convalescent, at which were present, with Carlyle and Syme and some members of Syme's family, no one but Dr. John Carlyle, Dr. John Brown, and David Masson, who relates<sup>3</sup> that it was very pleasant 'to observe the attention paid by the manly, energetic, and generally peremptory and pugnacious little surgeon to his important guest, his satisfaction in having him there, and his half-amused, half-wondering glances at him as a being of another *genus* than his own, but whom he had found as lovable in private as he was publicly tremendous.'

The conversation was 'genial and cheerful about this and that', and was continued after dinner in a small upstairs room, where Carlyle read aloud extracts from a new edition by David Laing of the *Gude and Godly Ballates* of the brothers Wedderburn, originally published in 1578, which Laing had that day sent him. The evening was concluded in the 'low trellised verandah on the south side of the house, opening

<sup>2</sup> Told by John Hutchison, LL.D., Glasgow, 1.11.1917, on hearing of William Johnstone's experience.

<sup>3</sup> *Edinburgh Sketches and Memories*, by D. Masson, pp. 404-6.

on the beautiful garden of flowers and evergreens in which Syme took such delight.'

After Edinburgh, Carlyle went on to Dumfries, where he had a visit one day from the Rev. William Corson, a neighbour at Craigenputtock whom Carlyle had adjured to be 'faithful' and not 'over-anxious about promotion', and who now had been for twenty years a successful preacher in Girvan. Mrs. Aitken warned him not to allude to the death of Mrs. Carlyle, and Corson was deeply impressed when Carlyle, whom he found busy correcting proofs, at once laid aside his work and began to talk.

Another friend who called was Thomas Aird, who five years before had retired from editorial work, but continued in Dumfries. His successor, A. D. Murray, observing his intimacy with Carlyle, was fain to share it, but was never able to make Carlyle's acquaintance. His brother-in-law, Mr. Aitken, warned him that Carlyle saw nobody he could avoid, and so Murray had to be content with meeting him occasionally 'in the gloaming, walking slowly along the country road, piloted by his niece in profound silence.'

'One day,' he reports, 'I was surprised to see him stand for a considerable time at the edge of a crowd round the hustings. We had a bye-election for the burghs, and these were hustings days. Afterwards I asked Mr. Aitken what the great man thought of the candidates. "Not much," he replied. "He says one of them appears to be a windbag and the other a fool."'

Aird himself called but seldom, telling Murray that he was often urged to come, but that Carlyle was gloomy and fretful away from his books and his work-room, and that therefore he would not intrude. 'He is hibernating, you know,' he added, 'like the bears.'

One day, however, when Murray came upon Aird sauntering by the river just after he had parted from Carlyle, Aird repeated some of the talk they had had—for Carlyle had been 'in his talking mood'. 'We had just come opposite to Troqueer churchyard,' said Aird. 'He stopped, took out his handkerchief, and rubbed his brows vigorously. Then, extending his long arm towards the churchyard, he said,—"Ay, there they lie in the hope of a blessed resurrection; but, depend upon it, Aird, they have a long time to wait yet!"'

\* From a Memoir of Thomas Aird in the 'Pen and Palette Club' papers for December, 1903, by A. D. Murray, editor of the *Dumfries and Galloway Herald*.





THOMAS CARLYLE, WITH DR. JOHN CARLYLE AND MARY CARLYLE ATKEN

*From a photograph by J. Pettick, Edinburgh*



Contemporary Christians were then frequently convulsed by lively apprehensions of an impending day of judgment—an apprehension which still leads now and again to peculiar manifestations on the part of the adherents of bizarre sects.

When Carlyle returned to Chelsea, 'fairly a little *better* for my Scotch journey and adventures', he took with him his niece, Miss Mary Carlyle Aitken, to be his companion and, later, amanuensis. Already he had suffered somewhat from a shaking right hand, and he came more and more to depend upon his niece, although he never reconciled himself to dictating, and always regarded it as a wearisome handicap. 'Within the last three or four years my right hand has become captious,' he wrote to FitzGerald, 'taken to shaking as you see, and all writing is a thing I require *compulsion* and close necessity to drive me into.'

Of his niece he was soon writing to his brother John: 'Mary I discover with wonder *won't* go to bed till I go;—consider it well, and then find (silently) it must have been *her Mother* (whom thank) that put her upon that dodge! A good little girl, Mary; and does me some good, and never any ill at all.'

## XLII

### THE STATUE OF MARSHAL KEITH

(1868)

'**P**ERHAPS the finest compliment ever paid to Carlyle', according to John Skelton, who wrote under the pseudonym of Shirley, was the Prussian King William's gift to Peterhead in 1868 of a statue of Marshal Keith, 'as a sort of visible thank-offering for "the good services rendered to Prussia by the highly gifted Scottish historian."' <sup>1</sup> It was a bronze replica of what had been set up in Berlin by Frederick the Great. As nobody in Peterhead reported the matter to Carlyle, John Skelton sent him the local papers with the news, and received a reply <sup>2</sup> (21.9.1868):—

'Thanks for your attention in regard to that of Peterhead and the Keith statue, which I had not heard of before. . . . I hope they will be grateful! The statue represents a fine

<sup>1</sup> *Essays in History and Biography*, by John Skelton, p. xxix.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxx.

bushy-browed, effective-looking Scottish man, and seemed to me a good one. . . . I should have liked well to meet you at Mr. Syme's; the name "Shirley" has long been familiar to me, and I read with avidity what I find marked in that way. May all go well with you in your quiet glen, of which also I have heard from witnesses.'

It remains to be added that before long Carlyle was writing 'to Dr. Longmuir of Aberdeen' a letter printed in the *Inverness Courier*:<sup>3</sup>—'If you know any likely man in Peterhead, I wish you would tell him that the word "*Hochkirchen*" they have put on the inscription under Keith's statue is an *ugly blotch of error*, much requiring erasure for their sake and his! "*Hochkirch*" was the village where Keith perished; there is no such place as "*Hochkirchen*" in the whole world, nor ever will be. "*Hochkirchen*" is worse than "*Peterheadikin*", an *incurable* solecism . . . No remedy but cutting out that EN and substituting silent granite.'

### XLIII

#### BACK IN CHELSEA

(1868)

ONCE safely home again, he began to occupy himself seriously with the sorting and copying of his wife's letters, which he had decided to preserve in this way, at least for himself, possibly for others, close friends who might be interested: to be 'kept unprinted for ten to twenty years after my death, if, indeed, *printed* at all, should there be any babbling of memory still afloat about me or her. That is at present my notion. At any rate, *they shall be left legible* to such as they do concern, and shall be if I live. To her, alas! it is no service, absolutely none, though my poor imagination represents it as one, and I go on with it as something pious and indubitably *right*; that some memory and image of one so beautiful and noble should not fail to survive by *my* blame, unworthy as I was of her, yet loving her far more than I could ever show, or even than I myself knew till it was too late.'<sup>1</sup>

An unfortunate accident compelled him to decide to

<sup>3</sup> Without date, Mr. Oscar Gridley's cuttings.

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*.

abandon what had been one of his most favourite forms of exercise, which latterly he had indulged in through the good offices of Miss Bromley, who had presented him with his present mount, Comet. On October 9 he wrote to Doctor John :

'Riding, however, is now fairly *over* : above a week ago, I had the once gallant little "*Comet*" brought down to me here ; delighted to see me the poor creature seemed ; but, alas, *idleness*, darkness and abundant oats, continued for 2 years, had undermined and hebetated, and in fact ruined the once glorious "*Comet*" : so that, in about half an hour, roads good, riding gentlest and carefullest, glorious Comet—splashed utterly down, cut *eye-brow* and both knees ; horse and rider fairly tracing out their united *Profile* on the soil of Middlesex (in the Holland-House region, silent elegant new streets south of that, hardly anybody seeing the phenomenon) ! As I stuck by the horse thro' his sprawlings, I had come down quite gradually, right stirrup rather *advanced*, so that I got no injury whatever, scarcely even a little *dust*. I continued at a quickish *walk*, for an hour longer ; but silently perceived that this must be my *last* ride on Comet. Ignorant, careless and lazy grooms ; not to give the little Horse his *exercise* (unless he could get it *gratis*), but merely to fling in *oats* ; glad that even the *want of currying* would never be noticed (except by me) !'

Allingham continued among others a regular visitor to Cheyne Row, and reports an interesting expression of opinion upon Browning's latest production. On Saturday, December 26, he called at three o'clock, fresh from lunch with Froude, and looking round the drawing-room as he waited saw signs of work on the *Miscellanies* for the Library Edition. He noticed the *Biographie Universelle* lying about, and photographs of Mrs. Carlyle, and a Frederick snuff-box, blue and gold—and Browning's *Ring and the Book*, 'part read.' Carlyle came in, and they walked together to Kensington Gardens ; and Allingham treasured what Carlyle said then about the rival poet's latest work : 'A curiously minute picture of Italian Society : not poetry at all.'<sup>2</sup>

When by and by Carlyle had finished reading it, he thus answered queries of FitzGerald for a candid opinion : 'I have read—insisted on reading—Browning's Book. It is full of talent, energy, and effort : but actually without

<sup>2</sup> *William Allingham, A Diary*, p. 194.

*Backbone* or Basis of Common-Sense. I think it among the absurdest books ever written by a gifted man.’<sup>3</sup>

Anne Gilchrist, in a letter to a friend, mentions a story, which Gabriel Rossetti told her, and which it seems Carlyle had related of himself,—‘how he met Browning and *meant* to say something to please about *The Ring and the Book*, but somehow ultimately found himself landed in the reverse of a compliment :—“It is a wonderful book, one of the most wonderful poems ever written. I re-read it all through—all made out of an Old Bailey story, that might have been told in ten lines and only wants forgetting !” G. R. seemed himself to lean to this view, and to think there was perversity in the choice of the subject, though of course redeemed by superb treatment.’<sup>4</sup>

On another occasion Carlyle declared that he had read the whole poem, in four volumes, ‘from beginning to end, without omitting a word, and a most extraordinary production it is ;—a work of great ingenuity and full of very striking sentences. I met Browning, indeed, in Piccadilly the other day, and I told him I’d read his poem from the first word thereof way to the last, and he said to me, quickly, “Well ! Well ?” and I replied that I thought it a book of prodigious talent and unparalleled ingenuity ; but then, I suppose trusting to the sincerity of my own thoughts, I went on to say that of all the strange books produced on this distracted earth, by any of the sons of Adam, this one was altogether the strangest and the most preposterous in its construction ; and where, said I, do ye think to find the eternal harmonies in it ? Browning did not seem to be pleased with my speech, and he bade me good morning.’<sup>5</sup>

Of his own works Carlyle spoke to Allingham with little or no enthusiasm. On Monday, December 28, Allingham called, to find in the parlour a ‘Scotch lassie, niece of Carlyle’ who ‘lives in Dumfries, has never been to London before’, but who talked to him ‘gravely and sensibly’ about the National Gallery, the Titians, and similar matters. Then Carlyle came in, and as there was promise of the pouring rain lifting they started on their walk, passing through Hans Place in a shower. Carlyle spoke then of his writings, which he said had given him much trouble. ‘I brought them into the world with labour and sorrow, and I must reckon most

<sup>3</sup> *More Letters of Edward FitzGerald*, p. 101.

<sup>4</sup> *Anne Gilchrist, Her Life and Writings*, ed. H. H. Gilchrist, pp. 174-5.

<sup>5</sup> *Letters of Charles Eliot Norton*, I, pp. 324-5.

of them but small trash after all. Ay, there's far too much dogmatism going: English funeral service, for example. The Scotch way is better in that '—meaning reverent silence, or at most few words. 'People write to me to try to bring me to Christ—ah me! If the Universe grinds me to nothing, I will hold that to be best and say, "Not my will but thine be done." I don't pretend to understand the Universe—it's a great deal bigger than I am. . . . People ought to be modest.'<sup>6</sup>

## XLIV

## COMFORTING HELPS IN AFFLICTION

(1868)

IN the sixties experts had persuaded Sir Arthur Helps that some blue clay on his estate was of value for bricks and terra-cotta. He put nearly all his capital into the company formed to exploit it, and lost so much that he had to sell the estate.<sup>1</sup> He was not wholly impoverished, having been Clerk to the Privy Council since 1860, and now was comfortably accommodated in one of the houses at Kew Gardens offered to him by the Queen. He was in favour at Court, if not as historian and philosopher, at least as the trusty confidential clerk and editor of royal emanations. One is reminded of Voltaire in 1746, when Pompadour was pleased to promote him to high offices in the Court of Louis XV: everything else he had written was ignored or unknown—he was honoured and rewarded for a loyal farce.<sup>2</sup> Queen Victoria, of course, was a much more satisfactory employer than the 'dunghill Bubbly-Jock' at Versailles, and Helps was as happy as could be expected; but his losses were afflicting.

Carlyle was distressed on his account, and wrote of him:—'Poor Helps, I was shocked to hear at Proctor's for the first time distinctly, is utterly ruined, confiscated (owing to some mine or bed of Potter's Clay he discovered), and is now living on a bare allowance of £200 a-year, near Croydon!'

<sup>6</sup> *William Allingham, A Diary*, p. 196.

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence of Sir Arthur Helps*, pp. 10, 11.

<sup>2</sup> Carlyle's *Frederick*, Book XVI, Chapter II.

To the victim himself he wrote to comfort him, praising his latest book, *Realmah*, which he had followed in *Macmillan's Magazine* and now had 'in a piece, to take a spell with when I please'. He told also how he had just gone 'through the big Spanish Conquest volumes too . . . in a right pleasant and prosperous way', and always wished the author 'good speed in this bad world'. He went on : 'I now pray only, May his diligence continue, increasing, not abating.

'If it do,—perhaps these disastrous Events (of which I never heard clearly till the other day), perhaps these may be only new quickeners in this direction ; and if so, are not disasters after all, dear Helps, but only blessings in disguise ! That, I believe, is verily the truth of the matter ; essentially what it means ? Bear a hand, at any rate ; *work* manlike while it is called To-day : the *wages* one gets, these are a mad thing always, mad especially in this our maddest of epochs ; we won't bother about these. Some things are for the day, and are eaten within the day ; some other things are forever, *forever*. Go ahead, I say, with a valiant heart.'

<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Correspondence of Sir Arthur Helps*, pp. 267-8.



BOOK XXVIII

REMINISCENCES, CONTINUED

1869—72



## ALTHAUS REPORTS PROGRESS

(1869)

TOWARDS three o'clock on a January afternoon, Friedrich Althaus came to Cheyne Row to report progress and ask a question or two about the *Frederick* he was translating, bringing with him as well the packet of papers lent him for a *Life* of Neuberg. He found Carlyle, in his dressing-gown, seated at the writing-table in the drawing-room, and was greeted with :

'Now it is a long time since I have seen you.'

He explained that he had hesitated to trouble him, then produced the packet and regretfully announced that although Neuberg's papers were fresh and attractive, there was nothing really new in them to German readers after the publication of *Frederick*. 'I found nothing suitable for a book in them,' he concluded.

Carlyle laid the packet aside without another word about it, and asked : 'How have things fared with you otherwise ?'

Althaus had plenty to ask and tell, beginning with *Frederick* questions, and he records that although out of doors Carlyle appeared to him like a German professor, in his study he was like Faust—a Faust whose 'humorous smile' was like frequent passing sunshine, often ending in a burst of loud spontaneous laughter. The style of his conversation varied with the topic, a deliberate, solemn tone alternating with a rapid, free-and-easy one, and whatever the tone or topic he was always lively and natural. 'In spite of the strength of his convictions,' Althaus declares, 'he was never in my hearing dogmatic, as some say ; and although he might occasionally speak as if half in soliloquy, he was always ready to listen and reply to questions.'<sup>1</sup>

After telling who the wise men of Gotham were, he asked

<sup>1</sup> F. Althaus in *Unsere Zeit*, Leipzig, 1881, No. 6, p. 842 ; and pp. 836-8.

about some French Revolution engravings. Althaus offered to look up in the British Museum one that was wanted for a new edition of his history, but was told: 'I have not yet decided what to do in the matter, and it is of no great importance.'

When he heard that Althaus had composed the historical catalogue of the last National Portrait Exhibition, Carlyle commented: 'I did not know that. The Exhibition was badly organised,—so much there that one does not wish to see, only a few portraits one would care to look at again. That is all due to the influence of 'a certain' miserable being . . . who arranges everything without method, and mauls and spoils it all. I was once at a committee meeting where somebody—Lord Granville, I think—made a speech to the effect,—“Everything is ready,” and left no time for anything to be done but agree with him. One ought to consult those who really know about the matter in hand. What deserves to be shown should be chosen, and the rest refused. I think the first and second Exhibitions were better on the whole than the last. There were some things which had not been seen before, the big bluff Henry VIII, for example; but there was a lot of rubbish.'

He told a good joke about the modern representatives of a Count there who ended on the scaffold, whose name Althaus suppressed, but whose namesakes 'are so proud of their Norman lineage, but they are really descended from another man whose offspring was substituted for the legitimate heir.'

As for the translation Althaus had in hand,—‘I wish you a quick ending,’ he said in parting, seeming pleased that the end was near.

## II

### AN AUDIENCE WITH THE QUEEN

(1869)

ONE day when Dean Stanley's wife, Lady Augusta, 'an active, hard and busy little woman'—who had been a Lady-in-waiting at Court before her marriage and continued on friendly terms with the Queen, was calling at Windsor, Victoria spoke to her of the formalities that hedged her about and said she would like to dispense with

them for once and meet a few men of letters in a quiet way, if her 'dear Augusta' could contrive it.<sup>1</sup>

'It's only for you to fix the day and name the men,' Lady Augusta replied.

Accordingly, Thursday, March 4, at five o'clock, was the time appointed, and the five men named—Lyell, Grote, Dickens, Browning, and Carlyle, all but the last already known to the Queen—yet it was the last that chiefly interested her at the moment: perhaps, Society said, on account of her German ancestry.

Mrs. Grote's 'peculiar' style of dressing came in for discussion. Her rose-coloured turban had once at a dinner made Sydney Smith exclaim,—'Now I know the meaning of the word grotesque.'<sup>2</sup> The Queen had 'at first,' according to Lady Augusta, 'decided to have only men at the party'; but on second thoughts consented to let Mrs. Grote and Lady Lyell accompany their husbands. The other three men had no longer wives to be invited.

A week before the appointed date Dean Stanley drove up to Cheyne Row with his wife, whose first step was to make sure of Carlyle. 'Must come, a very "high or indeed highest person has long been desirous", etc. etc.' He realised that he was being bidden to an audience with Her Majesty, and agreed.

He went by Underground to Westminster, and punctually to the moment presented himself at the Deanery door and was ushered into the long 'monastic' drawing-room, where he saw Mrs. Grote already arrived, 'a big, queer, strong woman'<sup>3</sup> of the self-assertive type, but on this occasion 'in a very suitable quiet gown.' Her husband joined her, and Lyell and his wife and Browning presently appeared, but something prevented Dickens from being there. Carlyle was well pleased to see the others, 'better than bargain', he thought. 'These will take the edge off the thing, if edge it have.' Mrs. Grote's coolness was a comfort to everybody. 'One natural advantage' she had, in the words of her admiring biographer, Lady Eastlake, 'which most people will envy her . . . *she was never shy.*'

The Stanleys had come in and the servants finished setting pots and cups 'of sublime patterns', when at five

<sup>1</sup> Carlyle's letters, &c., supplemented by other evidence, Smalley's *London Letters*, I, pp. 303 et seq., L. P. Walford's *Memories of Victorian London*, pp. 193-6; &c.

<sup>2</sup> *Sydney Smith*, by S. T. Reid, p. 377 and note.

<sup>3</sup> *Letters of Dr. John Brown*, ed. by his son and D. W. Forrest, p. 187.

o'clock to the minute 'the Queen came gliding into the room in a sort of swimming way, no feet visible,'<sup>4</sup> attended by the young Princess Louise and the Dowager Duchess of Atholl as Lady-in-Waiting. At fifty she still appeared 'plump and almost young, in spite of one broad wrinkle' seen 'in each cheek occasionally.' She had the soft low voice men love in a woman, and most politely 'made the circle'—a point of etiquette in which, as Ambassador Gerard has described amusingly, Royalties in Germany were particularly trained.

She came forward with 'a kindly little smile', shook hands with the women, and nodded acknowledgment to the men, who bowed. She did not fail to notice the suitable quiet dress of Mrs. Grote, and remarked upon it afterwards to her hostess when they were alone. But in the meantime she 'spoke a little word to each of us in succession as we stood,' reported Carlyle. 'To me it was, "Sorry you did not see my Daughter", Princess of Prussia, or "she sorry" perhaps, which led us into Potsdam, Berlin, etc., for an instant or two; to Sir Charles Lyell I heard her say "Gold in Sutherland", but quickly and delicately cut him *short* in responding; to Browning, "Are you writing anything?"'—which was more amusing than happy, for Browning had just published 'the longest poem ever written'. However, he was left contented, for she told him she had much enjoyed some of his wife's poems.<sup>5</sup>

What she said to Grote is not reported; 'but it was touch-and-go with everybody; Majesty visibly *without* interest or nearly so of her *own*.' Then she sat down in the corner of the sofa, in German style, the Dean's wife at the other end of it, and the other two ladies took chairs, Mrs. Grote 'intrusively close to Majesty', and Lady Lyell at the Stanley end of the sofa. The men were left standing, and coffee 'very black and muddy' was handed round.

It may have been now that the Princess Louise had a chat with Carlyle. He said he found her 'decidedly a very pretty young lady, and clever too . . . kind-hearted, nice bit lassie, with no pride about her; but several times I saw her taking a curious side-glance at me, and no doubt she was wondering in her own mind why on earth she was consigned to . . . such a rough old curmudgeon.'<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Carlyle to Mrs. Anstruther.

<sup>5</sup> R. M. Milnes, *Lord Houghton*, by T. Wemyss Reid, II, p. 200.

<sup>6</sup> *Some Personal Reminiscences of Carlyle*, by A. J. Symington, p. 72.

The coffee fairly done, Lady Augusta gently called Carlyle to 'come and speak with Her Majesty'. By this time it was approaching six, and as he afterwards explained in private, he could hardly endure the pain in his back from standing so long. The Queen began according to convention, 'to give to get esteem', by praising the Scots very much—'They are an intelligent people.' Carlyle, however, did not return the compliment. He merely entered a polite disclaimer: 'Very well, ma'am,—they're just like other folk,—neither much better nor much worse.'

An awkward silence was the natural sequel, which Carlyle broke in the most startling manner by begging leave to sit down: 'We will carry on the subject with greater ease if Your Majesty will allow me as an old infirmish man to sit down'<sup>7</sup>—although according to some accounts he drew forward a chair and plumped into it without more ado; but it seems probable that he first asked permission, then acted upon the assumption that it would be granted. In any case, his back was aching, he was tired, he wanted to sit down—and he did sit down.

'You may guess,' said the scandalised Lady Augusta afterwards, 'how we all cast our eyes on the ground!!! . . . It was certainly the very first time in her Majesty's life that such a request had been made by a subject, and you would have thought it the most ordinary thing in the world'—which to Carlyle it certainly was. The Queen consented—she could not well do anything else, for he was already seated—'and brave old Carlyle was happy for the rest of the evening. It needed a Carlyle of course to do it,' concluded Lady Augusta. Not long before, the Prime Minister, Lord Derby, had had audience with the Queen 'after a severe illness', and boasted as proof of the royal favour that she had condescended to say,—'How sorry I am that I cannot ask you to be seated!'<sup>8</sup>

When her Majesty recovered herself, 'What part of Scotland do you come from?' she asked Carlyle. He told her, and hinted that the locality was worth a visit. In Galloway, for example, he said, 'I believe there is no finer or more beautiful drive in your kingdom than the one round the shore of the Stewartry by Gatehouse of Fleet.'<sup>9</sup> Carlisle, 'Caer-Lewel', was 'a place about the

<sup>7</sup> *Memoirs of Gerald Blunt*, by Reginald Blunt, p. 97, &c.

<sup>8</sup> *Queen Victoria*, by Lytton Strachey, pp. 287-8.

<sup>9</sup> Ruskin's *Præterita*, III, para. 64.

antiquity of King Solomon', whereat she smiled, and seemed to be pleased with the talk that followed about border ballads and Glasgow as his grandfather saw it—the streets vacant at half-past nine at night, and no sound audible but the singing of psalms,—‘hard, sound and genuine Presbyterian *root* of what has now shot up to be such a monstrously ugly Cabbage-tree and Hemlock-tree!’

Their talk lasted for about a quarter of an hour, and what Browning noticed as he contrived to listen was that Carlyle was ‘expressing himself with his usual force . . . about the rich and the poor.’ The Queen was saying little; but afterwards to Browning she commented,—‘What a very singular person Mr. Carlyle is!’<sup>10</sup>

Mrs. Grote was restless, maybe suspicious of the significance of this asking for a chair. It was bad enough to see Carlyle called forward first. Grote was as old as he, and rich enough to be offered a peerage presently, great enough to decline it, in spite of his wife’s having ‘spent her life dissipating’ his ‘prejudices against rank and society.’<sup>11</sup> She rose and fetched her husband forward, ‘asked leave for him to sit down too,’<sup>4</sup> and planted him on her own chair, ‘cheek by jowl with Majesty, who evidently did not care a straw for him; but kindly asked, “Writing anything?” and one heard, “Aristotle, now that I have done with Plato, etc.” etc.—but only for a minimum of time.’

Apropos of Carlyle’s shaking right hand, which the Queen had remarked and asked about, she began to tell of her own difficulty in dictation, which brought the Lyells forward, since they were used to that; and so the talk dribbled down to common trifles, and the Queen prepared to retire. Her far-spreading dress was caught by Carlyle’s chair, and she could not rise until he removed it, which he quickly did.<sup>9</sup> Then she withdrew; and in ten minutes more sailed in again to receive their farewell bows ‘very prettily . . . as if moving on skates . . . bending her head towards us with a smile’ as she departed.

To Carlyle, expecting death before long, the interview was of little if any consequence, but it might have pleased his wife had she been alive, he reflected, and noted in his Journal: ‘Queen . . . rose gently in my esteem, by every-

<sup>10</sup> *Letters of Charles Eliot Norton*, I, p. 327.

<sup>11</sup> *Mrs. Grote*, by Lady Eastlake, pp. 43–5, and *Mrs. Grote’s Life of George Grote*, pp. 306–10.



thing that happened, did not fall in any point.' The Princess Louise came afterwards to see him at Cheyne Row, and by and by brought and presented to him a portrait she had done of J. L. Motley, executed 'in a few sittings very successfully,' Motley declared to Oliver Wendell Holmes, at her 'pretty villa near Tunbridge Wells.'<sup>12</sup>

To Browning the audience mattered more. What though the Queen had let out that she knew nothing of what he was writing? She led the fashion. In consequence of this reception, the poet 'was courted by the aristocracy', and so delightful a table-talker that a young American woman was not far wrong when she declared she found him 'dinnered to death'.<sup>13</sup>

The Grotes were beyond this. They did not need any social help from the Queen. Mrs. Grote had all the virtues she affected, and was a model of a wife. She had taken to solid literature for her husband's sake, and to kill time, as she was childless. In a year or two more she was a widow, and piously and well compiled a volume about the man she honoured; but in it she was silent about this interview with the Queen.

The newspapers at the time were prompt to publish 'all that is known and more', and Gerald Blunt was diligent in his enquiries. 'Do you think the Queen has read your books?' he asked Carlyle, who answered: 'She may have read many books, but I do not think she has read mine,'—a guess confirmed by her best biographer, Lytton Strachey.<sup>14</sup> If she had known the beautiful anecdote of Frederick making old Ziethen take a chair while he himself remained standing before him, she might not have been surprised that a frail old man, whom she had kept standing a long time, begged leave to sit down when she wanted him to talk to her.

Dean Stanley, questioned by Gerald Blunt, declared that the interview between Her Majesty and Carlyle was 'no great success.' There was plenty of gossip, of course, and a scrap, undated, but undoubtedly written soon after, from the Letter-Bag of Lady Elizabeth Spencer-Stanhope,<sup>15</sup> is typical:

<sup>12</sup> *Correspondence* of J. L. Motley, II, p. 401.

<sup>13</sup> *Autobiography* of Moncure D. Conway, II, pp. 22 and 28.

<sup>14</sup> *Queen Victoria*, pp. 289-90.

<sup>15</sup> Volume II, pp. 306-8.

*Mrs. Anna Maria Pickering (née Stanhope) to Lady Elizabeth Spencer-Stanhope :*

'I was told the other day that when Dickens had an interview with the Queen, she kept him standing all the time, and although kind in manner, treated him *de haut en bas*, not even offering to shake hands with him when he took his departure'—which would have been rude, if true. But the gossip has been corrected by Forster, in his *Life of Dickens* (III, pp. 468-9). In taking leave of him, the Queen presented him with a copy of her own book with an autograph inscription, saying that 'the humblest of writers' would be ashamed to offer it to 'one of the greatest', but that Sir Arthur Helps, when asked to give it, suggested Dickens would like it best from herself. So Dickens departed delighted with her politeness, which was quite probably sincere.

Mrs. Pickering goes on: 'With Carlyle the case was somewhat different. The old Scotsman calmly took the initiative. . . . The Queen was much affronted, and . . . declared she would see no more literary men!'—which requires correction, for it was after the interview with Carlyle that she was so charming to Dickens; and one of Disraeli's most impudent flatteries was to call her the leader of English authors.

It was in favour of that dear man that she remembered the lesson Carlyle had given her, and once when Disraeli was ill she offered him a chair, which he prudently declined. Later on she allowed old Gladstone to be seated, and then Salisbury. But she saw no more of Carlyle. If she had heard how he laughed at 'Windsor Georges', or if she had read and understood the mockery of hereditary royalty in *Sartor*, she would probably never have seen him at all. His avoidance of flattery was shock enough, and she probably felt as when once her yacht was struck by a heavy sea, which shook her in her cabin, and she sent a peremptory note to the captain: 'This must not occur again!' <sup>16</sup>

When Alfred Smith told the translator of Omar Khayyam of how Carlyle had shocked the Queen,—'The Queen ought to have asked him to sit down,' cried Fitzgerald impatiently, 'an old man like him!' <sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *My Diaries*, by W. S. Blunt.

<sup>17</sup> *Life of E. Fitzgerald*, by T. Wright, II, p. 104.

## III

THE *FREDERICK* TRANSLATION ENDED  
(1869)

ONE afternoon in March Althaus called about three with questions on the last volume of *Frederick*, the translation of which he had just completed. It was raining, and nothing was said about a walk they had intended. They drew their chairs to the fire, and as the questions were being answered Althaus noted once more the orderliness of the room and of everything about Carlyle.<sup>1</sup>

Explaining a reference to the Gadarene swine and the 'most sweet voices', Carlyle told how the great Pitt had been brought into Parliament for Old Sarum, and said, 'The roar of Democracy in our time is like one of those torrents of Gadarene swine; and with all their voices, they will never again bring a Pitt into Parliament, never in a thousand years, until all this unrest is over.'

The questions ended, he was easily led to talk of Prussian historians, who were incapable of describing events in a lively way. Thus of Förster and his big book about Friedrich Wilhelm, he declared: 'I believe I met him in the Royal Library in Berlin, a man whose mind's eyes were darkened,—he had not the glimmer of an idea of the need for telling the time and place of events. He left the chronology of Frederick William in the worst mess imaginable. I never was gladder of anything than when done with it. He has chapters, "Frederick William as German Patriot", or "As Father of the Country", and so on, where he tears his man to bits and leaves his readers to put the bits together as they can. It is as if at a luncheon party the host were to pour everything into one big trough, soup and liquors, meat, vegetables, and pudding all together, and invite the guests to fish out every one what he wanted.'

Althaus mentioned Ranke, of whom and his nine books of Prussian history Carlyle had formerly said he had 'nothing humane', and the verdict now was: 'He is very learned and accurate, he has rummaged the archives and read endless dispatches of ambassadors; but there is no life in his book. There is nothing like a picture of Frederick.

<sup>1</sup> *Unsere Zeit*, Leipzig, 1881, No. 6, p. 840; and for March, 1869, pp. 838-42.

He distils his materials into a colourless essence and shows you the ghosts of men and things, as if one were to burn a big oak tree and make a faded miniature counterfeit out of the ashes.'

Preuss, of whose death Althaus informed him, he had met in Berlin,—'a very worthy man, most accurate. Perhaps nobody again will ever know as many details of Prussian history as he did. It was method that he lacked. I was vexed to find he applied to himself what is said of Dry-as-dust in the first two volumes of my history. I used the word vaguely for Prussian historians in general, without any special reference to him, and Neuberg wrote and told him so, but he would have nothing more to do with us. We had often referred to him before then. Thus when we wanted to know whether Frederick William had really ordered Professor Wolff to depart from his dominions, bag and baggage, "within forty-eight hours under pain of the halter", it was Preuss who sent us a copy of the Cabinet Order and settled the matter.'<sup>2</sup>

In parting, he congratulated Althaus on the completion of his self-imposed task, and begged him to come again whenever he liked or had anything to ask.

#### IV

### NORTON IS INTRODUCED

(1869)

ONE day the dilettante Grant-Duff met Tyndall in the Athenæum Club, and told him about a young man from Massachusetts then in London, Charles Eliot Norton, who was very anxious to meet Carlyle, but held back because he had heard that the old man disliked Americans. Tyndall was able to reply at once that his feelings were rather of gratitude than of dislike, but to make sure he went down to Chelsea himself and asked Carlyle.

'What nonsense!' he was told. 'Bring him down here immediately.'<sup>1</sup>

Accordingly he arranged to do so, and on March 22 he and Grant-Duff and young Norton arrived about half-past

<sup>2</sup> *History of Frederick*, Book V, Chapter VII.

<sup>1</sup> *New Fragments*, by J. Tyndall, pp. 378-9.

eight, and stayed for two hours, the American immensely struck with their host, whom he found 'like his recent photographs, save that there is less of despair and despondency in his actual countenance, and less wildness and uncouthness in his hair and aspect generally,' and 'nothing either in look or manner to suggest the feebleness of age.'<sup>2</sup>

Carlyle spoke with all his characteristic vigour and frequent bursts of humour to lighten his seriousness, and Norton was invited to come again. In the many free talks which followed, Carlyle found him a distinct acquisition, as a friend of Emerson and a man of the same type, with an open sense for human worth. Perhaps remembering Norton's scruples about calling, he remarked one day that he had thought of showing his gratitude to New England by bequeathing it the books he had had to gather together for the work on Cromwell and Frederick—nothing, he explained, made him hesitate but 'the extreme insignificance of the gift'. Assured by Norton that it would be welcomed, he consulted Emerson also, and ended by leaving the collection to Harvard University, where Norton was a teacher.

He offered it, as he wrote to Professor Norton, 'as a proof of my grateful loving and hopeful feeling to New England and it'—Harvard—'of my true, essentially kind and deep regard to the great New-English Nation, and to America at large, where I believe myself to have long had many silent friends.' He added one injunction: 'absolute silence on the matter; that no hint or whisper of it get into the Newspapers, to raise importunate, impertinent and empty rumourings and noises, till once I be out of hearing of them.'

The gift was subsequently very much appreciated, and a printed catalogue of the books was prepared.

After many meetings, Norton's considered opinion was that 'Carlyle is always entertaining and original to a degree of which no description (not even the excellent one of Mr. Henry James) can convey an adequate expression. His great quality is humour, and like other humorists, even in his most serious moods his mind retains a certain playfulness, which finds vent in grim jokes and extravagant exaggerations. He is rarely to be taken *au pied de la lettre*.'<sup>2</sup>

One day Norton called by appointment, taking a friend, the brother of Lord Cowper, with him, and they went out

<sup>2</sup> *Letters of C. E. Norton*, I, pp. 322 et seq.

walking with Carlyle. He had been reading 'a worthy old book, called Collins's Peerage', and recommended it to the American, telling him he would find by studying it there 'in early times there was some meaning and virtue in the English nobility. But,' he went on, 'things have greatly changed, and nowadays they talk about making a peer out of a Jew, with nothing to recommend him except his ill-gotten wealth. It's a sad fall.'

Naturally, Carlyle had still something to say on the American Civil War, and Norton records a remark repeated to him by Lord Russell as one of the best of Carlyle's dicta on that subject: 'Why, the difference between the North and the South in relation to the nigger is just this,—the South says to the nigger, "God bless you! and be a slave," and the North says, "God damn you! and be free."' '

## V

## A PORTRAIT OF MRS. CARLYLE

(1869)

CARLYLE, assisted now by his niece, was kept occupied by the proofs of the Library Edition of his works, and also by the final sorting of his wife's letters, packets of which he had received from different friends. In a letter to Doctor John, he tells him: 'Mary and I are very busy here; doing all we can to finish our sad Task (while time yet is); and indeed are far on; and hope we shall be through it, in a rough form, before many weeks. It has been, and is, naturally one of the mournfullest I ever had. Perhaps *it* has had something to do with the miserable want of sleep, etc., that has persecuted me for almost ten months now, fit after fit? I am glad to report myself now improved in that respect.'

On April 29 he noted in his Journal, apropos of the work on the Letters and Memorials: 'Perhaps this mournful, but pious, and ever interesting task, escorted by such miseries, night after night, and month after month—perhaps all this may be wholesome punishment, purification, and monition, and again *a blessing in disguise*. I have had many such in my life. Some strange belief in an actual particular Providence rises always in me at intervals, faint

but indestructible belief in spite of logic and arithmetic, which does me good. If it be true and a fact, as Kant and the clearest scientific people keep asserting, that there is no Time and no Space, I say to myself sometimes, all minor "Logic" and counting by the fingers becomes in such provinces an incompetent thing. Believe what thou must, that is a rule that needs no enforcing.'

He had commissioned an artist in Glasgow to execute a painting of his wife, based presumably upon existing photographs, and he wrote of it: 'The picture is beautiful (colouring, finish, etc., all excellent); and has a *great resemblance*,—though to me almost a distressing one, the *expression* being such a failure! In general, I find the look of the face to be sickly, *suffering*, and even *querulous*,—which latter it surely never was. . . .

'I am too little of an artist to say what detail, or details (probably something very small), would quite rectify the picture; I was struck, first of all, by the *smallness* and comparative insignificance of the *eye*. . . . I still think something could be done on that eye. . . .

'If Mr. McNab, by diligent inspection of the photograph, and judicious *consideration* of these poor hints, can guess or *see* what is wanting, and *do* it, he will confer a favour on me not to be forgotten while I live.'

Later he wrote a second brief note to express his gratitude, presumably for the satisfactory alteration of the portrait.

'You have with much delicacy and patience followed all the hints I gave; and surely I owe you many thanks. The picture is decidedly improved, evidently the *best likeness* I shall now ever get.

'May your Art always prosper with you!'<sup>1</sup>

## VI

### ALTHAUS BRINGS AN ENGRAVING

(1869)

ONE afternoon in June Althaus brought an engraving of General Ziethen, obligingly furnished by Decker of Berlin, on hearing that Carlyle wanted something of the sort. He looked a long time at it in silence, well pleased,

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Thomas Carlyle*, by R. H. Shepherd, Vol. II, pp. 235-7.

then mentioned that he had once drafted a letter to the Bavarian Ambassador about some pictures needed for *Frederick*. Neuberg put it into official German and he was about to transcribe it,—‘But when we had got so far,’ he said, smiling, ‘I decided to give up the whole matter.’

This led on to another letter recently received from a Prussian General in Berlin, which he produced, and he read a translation of it ‘in a loud emphatic voice with a broad Scotch accent.’ It was full of enthusiasm for the excellent history of Frederick, which hit the nail on the head every time, and it begged permission to send him a picture as a token of thanks and respect. His lips curled in a good-humoured smile at some of the enthusiastic words, but the serious, earnest tone returned as he read on, and it was evident that he enjoyed the letter.

He was keenly interested to hear details of Althaus’s work, and presently went out with him as he was leaving, to walk part of the way home with him. Althaus did not fail to send him copies of his German writings—*Englische Charakterbilder*, published in Berlin in 1869, and so on, and he proudly quotes the praise this earned. ‘The Disraeli article is the best, with a great deal of real portraiture in it; but you have not crowned him with hemlock as much as you might have done.’

The ‘Disraeli article’ ran to 78 pages, and that on Carlyle to ten more; but not a word appears to have been said or written by Carlyle to him on what concerned himself. He left Althaus to infer what he liked from his continued cordiality, but in his private copy he wrote what others showed to its author long afterwards: ‘This poor essay is, on the whole, the best that has ever appeared about me.’<sup>1</sup>

He preserved the same silence about Neuberg, and whatever he hoped (and he often enquired what Althaus was doing, perhaps waiting to hear that he had undertaken the life of Neuberg), the materials were never again mentioned. Althaus never reconsidered his decision not to use them; and now it was physically impossible for Carlyle to do so himself.

The last letter Althaus knew him write with his own hand was in pencil, this year, and his last word on Neuberg was, ‘We will let him be.’<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Letter of 4.1.1919 to D. A. W. from Althaus’s son, T. F. Althaus, for 23 years Professor of German Literature at University College, London.

<sup>2</sup> *Macmillan’s Magazine*, Aug. 1884, p. 280.



## VII

## A GOOD TURN FOR MRS. OLIPHANT

(1869)

A WINDSOR organist, Bridge by name, had prepared the score of a part song, setting to music some verses of *In Memoriam*, and on his behalf Mrs. Oliphant was moved to apply for permission to reprint the lines along with the music. She was correctly informed that Tennyson particularly objected to publishing any part of the poem set to music, whereupon she betook herself to Carlyle, who was willing to employ his good offices, and on his 'solicitation' Tennyson gave his consent politely enough.<sup>1</sup>

It was about this time, apparently, that she made the acquaintance of Tennyson and his wife, and a letter to Tennyson from Carlyle was found by his son stowed away in the bottom of a tobacco-box which Carlyle had given the poet 'as a pledge of eternal brotherhood':

'Mrs. Oliphant, whom this note accompanies, is an old and esteemed friend of this house; distinguished in literature, *Life of Edward Irving*, etc., and what is best of all, a highly amiable, rational and worthy lady.'

It is recorded that when she and Mrs. Tennyson were taking leave of each other, with the customary social insincerities—'so kind', 'delighted', and so forth, 'according to the established ritual', the poet stood by, towering over them, and cried: 'What liars you women are!'<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Oliphant had sense enough not to be offended, though she felt that what he said was 'not so civil as it was true'. Perhaps she again invoked a good word from Carlyle. At any rate the poet was polite and even tender with the good little woman the next time they met.

Later, she called one day to ask Carlyle to go down to Eton to see her boys, whom she had sent there. He passed no comment on the most famous of English schools, but simply excused himself. He would like to see the boys, and if he could have stepped into a boat at the nearest pier and been carried quietly up the river, that would have been very well; but he was no longer fit for 'the jar of little railway journeys and changes.' He went on to tell

<sup>1</sup> *Autobiography and Letters of Mrs. Oliphant*, pp. 128 and 188.

Mrs. Oliphant of the weakness that was growing upon him, the failing of age in his limbs, and quoted the psalm :

Threescore and ten years do sum up  
 Our days and years, we see ;  
 Or if, by reason of more strength,  
 In some fourscore they be :  
 Yet doth the strength of such old men  
 But grief and labour prove . . .

‘ Neither he nor I,’ says Mrs. Oliphant, ‘ could remember the next two lines,’ which run :

For it is soon cut off, and we  
 Fly hence and soon remove.

As he gazed at the eager little mother who would drag him so far to visit her sons, ‘ It’s a mother *I* want !’ he cried, with amused admiration, and burst into laughter.

## VIII

### THOUGHTS ON RELIGION

(1869)

**I**N the beginning of October, Carlyle was pleasantly occupied for many days reading an old book, *A Resitution of Decayed Intelligence in Antiquities*, whose author Verstegan, or Richard Rowlands, was a contemporary of Shakespeare. He enjoyed ‘ with wonder’, as he noted in his Journal, ‘ the curious bits of correct etymology and real sense and insight, floating about among masses of mere darkness and quasi-imbecility.’

The book led him to enlarge, in the privacy of the Journal, upon his own conclusions, and he comments that ‘ it is certain we have in these two centuries greatly improved in our geologies, in our notions of the early history of man. Have got rid of *Moses*, in fact, which surely was no very sublime achievement either. I often think, however, it is pretty much *all* that science in this age has done, or is doing. . . .

‘ Three nights ago,’ he continued later, ‘ stepping out after midnight, with my *final* pipe, and looking up into the stars, which were clear and numerous, it struck me with a strange new kind of feeling,—“ Hah ! in a little

while I shall have seen you also for the last time. God Almighty's own Theatre of Immensity, the *Infinite* made palpable and visible to me : that also will be closed, flung-to in my face, and I shall never behold that either any more. And I knew so little of it ; real as was my effort and desire to know ! ” The thought of *this* eternal deprivation (even of this, though this is such a nothing in comparison !) was sad and painful to me :—and then a second feeling rose on me, “ What if Omnipotence, which has developed in me these *pieties*, these reverences and infinite affections, should actually have said, Yes, poor mortals, such of you as have gone so far, *shall* be permitted to go farther ; hope, despair not ! ” I have not had such a feeling for many years back as at that moment, and so mark it here.’

On November 13 he continued these reflections further : ‘ The quantity of potential and even consciously increasing Atheism, sprouting out everywhere in these days, is enormous. In every scientific or quasi-scientific periodical one meets it. By the last American mail I had two eloquent, determined, and calmly zealous declarations of it. In fact, there is clear prophecy to me that in another fifty years it will be the new religion of the whole tribe of hard-hearted and hard-headed men in this world, who, for their time, bear practical rule in the world's affairs. Not only all Christian churches but all Christian religions are nodding towards speedy downfall in this Europe that now is. Figure the residuum : man made chemically out of *Urschleim*, or a certain blubber called *protoplasm*. Man descended from the apes, or the shell-fish. Virtue, duty, or utility an association of ideas, and the corollaries from all that. France is amazingly advanced in that career. England, America, are making still more passionate speed to come up with her, to pass her, and be the vanguard of progress. What I had to note is this only : that nobody need *argue* with these people, or can with the least effect. Logic never will decide the matter, or will decide it—seem to decide it—their way. He who traces nothing of God in his own soul will never find God in the world of matter—mere circlings of *force* there, of iron regulation, of universal death and merciless indifferency. Nothing but a dead steam-engine there. It is in the soul of man, when reverence, love, intelligence, magnanimity have been developed there, that the *Highest* can disclose itself face to face in splendour, independent of all cavils and jargonings. There,

of a surety, and nowhere else. And is not that the real court for such a cause? Matter itself—the outer world of matter—is either Nothing or else a product due to man's *mind*. To Mind, all questions, especially this question, come for ultimate decision, as in the universal highest and final Court of Appeal. I wish all this could be developed, universally set forth, and put on its true basis. Alas! I myself can do nothing with it, but perhaps others will.'

On his birthday, December 4, he wrote: 'For seventy-four years have I now lived in this world. That is a fact awakening cause enough for reflection in the dullest man. . . . If this be my last birthday, as is often not improbable to me, may the Eternal Father grant that I be ready for it, frail worm that I am. Nightly I look at a certain photograph—at a certain *tomb*—the last thing I do. Most times it is with a mere feeling of dull woe, of endless love, as if choked under the inexorable. In late weeks I occasionally feel able to wish with my whole softened heart—it is my only form of prayer—"Great Father, oh, if Thou canst, have pity on her and on me, and on all such." In this at least there is no harm. The fast-increasing flood of *Atheism* on me takes no hold—does not even wet the soles of my feet. I totally disbelieve it; despise as well as abhor it; nor dread that it ever can prevail as a doom of the sons of men. Nay, are there not perhaps temporary *necessities* for it, inestimable future uses in it? Patience! Patience! and hope! The new diabolical school of the French is really curious to me. Baudelaire, for example. Ode of his in *Fraser* the other night. Was there ever anything so bright infernal? *Fleurs du Mal* indeed!'

But the next entry in the Journal shows that Atheism can be as dull as theology or any other pocket theory of things:

'It is notable how Atheism spreads among us in these days. Z's protoplasm (unpleasant doctrine that we are all, soul and body, made of a kind of blubber, found in nettles among other organisms) appears to be delightful to many. . . . One X, an army surgeon, has continued writing to me on these subjects from all quarters of the world a set of letters, of which, after the first two or three, which indicated an insane vanity, as of a stupid cracked man, and a dull impiety as of a brute, I have never read beyond the opening word or two. . . . Yesterday there came a pamphlet, published at Lewes, by some moral philosopher, there called

Julian, which, on looking into it, I find to be a hallelujah on the advent and discovery of Atheism ; and in particular, a crowning—with cabbage or I know not what—of this very X. The real joy of Julian was what surprised me—sincere joy you would have said—like the shout of a hyæna on finding that the whole universe was actually carrion. In about seven minutes my great Julian was torn in two and lying in the place fit for him.’

Soon after then, Carlyle was reading a posthumous work by Professor Grote, an ‘ anxious remonstrance against . . . Utilitarian Morals.’ Well meant, but bewildered, it caused him to remark : ‘ He that still doubts whether his sense of right and wrong is a revelation from the Most High, I would recommend him to keep silence, rather to do silently, with more and more of pious earnestness, what said sense *dictates* to him as right. Day by day in this manner will he do better, and also see more clearly where the sanction of his doing is, and whence derived. By pious heroic climbing of your own, not by arguing with your poor neighbours, wandering to right and left, do you at length reach the sanctuary—the victorious summit—and see with your own eyes. The prize of heroic labour, suffering, and performance this, and not a feat of dialectics or of tongue argument with yourself or with another, I more and more perceive it to be. To cease that miserable problem of accounting for the “ moral sense ” is becoming highly desirable in our epoch. Can you account for the “ sense of hunger ”, for example ? Don’t ; it is too idle ; if you even could ; which you never can or will, except by merely telling me in new words that it is hunger ; and if, in accounting for “ hunger ”, you more and more gave up eating, what would become of your philosophy and you ? Cease, cease, my poor empty-minded, loud-headed, much-bewildered friends. “ Religion,” this, too, God be thanked, I perceive to be again possible, to be again here, for whoever will piously struggle upwards, and sacredly, sorrowfully, *refuse to speak lies*, which indeed will mostly mean refuse to speak at all on that topic. No words for it in our base time. In no time or epoch can the Highest be spoken of in words—not in many words, I think, *ever*. But it can even now be silently beheld, and even *adored* by whoever has eyes and adoration, i.e. reverence in him. Nor, if he must be for the present lonely . . . in such act, will that always be the case ? No, probably no, I begin to perceive ; not always,

nor altogether. But in the meanwhile Silence. Why am I writing this even here? The beginning of all is to have done with Falsity; to eschew Falsity as Death Eternal.'

Later he repeated what he had already noted about his belief in a 'particular Providence':

'I wish I had strength to elucidate and write down intelligibly to my fellow-creatures what my outline of belief about God essentially is. It might be useful to a poor protoplasm generation, all seemingly determined on those poor terms to try Atheism for a while. They will have to return from that, I can tell them, or go down altogether into the abyss. I find lying deep in me withal some confused but ineradicable flicker of belief that there is a "particular providence". Sincerely I do, as it were, believe this, to my own surprise.'

A credible curate<sup>1</sup> offers a glimpse of a conversation one Sunday evening, when Mr. Brookfield had joined the Rectory supper party, in a fine humour, excited but not exhausted by his preaching. After 1866, Gerald Blunt had had less and less occasion to meet Carlyle, for he had been principally Jane Welsh Carlyle's friend, but their mutual goodwill was never diminished, and they had many a friendly chat.

'Saint Gerald' was Carlyle's name for Blunt; and the lucky curate eagerly listened to his 'lighter discourse' and Carlyle's 'magnificent monologues'—'two consummate masters of talk.'

'After Carlyle had expatiated for an hour, amid perfect silence, about St. Paul,' he reports, 'the Rector exclaimed,—"Oh, Mr. Carlyle, how I wish that could have been spoken in my pulpit!"' When Brookfield was departing, he whispered to the curate: 'Good night. However long you and I may live, we shall never hear anything like that again.'

The Rector's son, Reginald Blunt, believed that next to Maurice, Carlyle had the most influence on his father's creed,<sup>2</sup> and it is difficult to doubt this when we see Gerald Blunt, an old man waiting for death, listening to his daughter reading Carlyle's words. Probably what affected him was their friendly intercourse for twenty years, and 'the gradual unfolding to him of a character in some respects supremely great, to which so much of orthodox Christianity was an

<sup>1</sup> Rev. T. W. Norwood, obituary notice of Gerald Blunt.

<sup>2</sup> *Memoirs of Gerald Blunt*, by Reginald Blunt, pp. 190, 132, 177, 191, 228 and 96,

impossible creed, yet in which the roots of pure religion and undefiled had so firm and fine a hold.' He found in Carlyle not only 'divine despair' at the prevailing hypocrisy, dishonesty, and slackness, but also 'a sympathy for whatever was true and manly and honest.' His 'absolute resignation to the will of God was the one root and ground of his whole religion.'

Carlyle avoided the discussion of theology, and to clergymen his silence upon such matters was complete. Even direct questions were parried. We can see this reticence in one thing Reginald Blunt tells: Carlyle 'once said to my father that a man's religion consisted, not in the many things about which he doubted, but in the few of which he had no doubt.'

He had numerous clerical acquaintances, and if he avoided theological discussion he equally did not disguise his own position. Once a curate who knew him had the luck to overtake him, walking 'down Sydney Street alone to join his friends,'<sup>3</sup> and greeted him:

'How do you do, Mr. Carlyle?'

'How do you do, sir? Is it Mr. Demaus?'

'Yes.'

'And pray, where may you be going to?'

'I am going to St. Luke's, to take the afternoon service.'

'And were you there this morning?'

'Yes.'

'And maybe you are going again to-night?'

'Yes.'

'And then you will have said all those grand solemn words three times over in one day?' He added, after some reply in acquiescence: 'Let me tell you, it would be too much for a Godly man to say them all once in a lifetime!'

Mr. Demaus was not offended. Carlyle's meaning was probably the same as when on another Sunday another clergyman, this time the Rev. Thomas Alexander, the Presbyterian minister, greeted him.

'Not tired of preaching yet, Alexander?' he challenged.

There followed a friendly chat, which Carlyle closed with the words: 'If I were preaching to your people this morning, do you know what I would say to them?' "You know the truth. In God's name, go home and do it!"'

<sup>3</sup> Rev. T. W. Norwood's obituary notice of Gerald Blunt in *The Times*, reprinted in *Memoirs of Gerald Blunt*, by Reginald Blunt, p. 197.

## IX

## DEMOCRACY AND ANARCHY

(1870)

IT was at the beginning of 1870 that Sir George Grey was finally compelled by the London Caucus to abandon the arena of English politics, electors proving like the chaff the wind blows to and fro, and Carlyle's strictures on the democratic principle and votes of rich and poor, wise and ignorant, saint and sinner, sage and scallywag being further vindicated. In March there was a by-election for Newark, which seemed to open the way for him into the House ; but Ireland was current politics then, and Grey knew too much about it. He argued from colonial precedents and principles for Home Rule for the tragic and turbulent island, and his biographers boast that his two friends, Carlyle and Froude, at first equally differed from him on this subject. But 'the arguments used by Grey converted Carlyle completely', although Froude remained unconvinced.<sup>1</sup>

Assuredly Carlyle did all he could to show goodwill to Grey in the Newark election, and took occasion to praise him to Lord Derby, with whom he fell in accidentally on March 23. They had some pleasant conversation on emigration and Grey, and Derby came down on the right side, 'clear for emigration', against the wholesale and indiscriminate shovelling out of derelicts to the colonies. He warmly desired to see the colonies and the mother-country kept together 'by every rational and feasible method', and immediately, with evident pleasure, assented to Carlyle's proposal to send Grey to him to talk things over. 'Decidedly . . . worth your while to go,' Carlyle wrote to Grey, in sending him his card with this suggestion.

But Newark was a Government seat, and Gladstone flung all his forces, backed by those of the London Caucus, against the premature Home-Ruler. An official Liberal candidate entered the field against Grey, who was regarded as a 'dangerous man' and a threat to the Liberal Party. There was every likelihood now that a split vote would allow a Conservative to secure an easy victory, and Grey, seeing how hopeless it was, retired from the contest, return-

<sup>1</sup> *Sir George Grey*, by W. L. and L. Rees, II, pp. 447, 437-55.



ing shortly to New Zealand, where he needed no manipulation of wires to secure a seat in Parliament, and where his services were sure of a welcome.

Incidentally, he happened to come upon some authentic Cromwell papers, and, while refusing them to the British Museum, offered them to Carlyle, who, however, declared himself 'too old to undertake a fresh task' and edit them, and suggested that the work should be given to some younger man. So the papers lie now in the 'Grey Collection' of the Auckland Library, awaiting an editor there, if one should come to deal with them.<sup>2</sup>

Carlyle, of course, was deeply disappointed at Grey's withdrawal. Systematic and wisely controlled emigration had always seemed to him an essential for the well-being of the Empire; but he was old, and, however strong his feelings, no longer physically capable of championing any cause. He saw the danger to the colonies of the haphazard dispatching of rogues and undesirables to those conveniently distant territories, and in America and American anarchy he saw a sad example. 'Yes,' he noted in his Journal, on 14.4.1870; 'it is huge, loud, ugly to soul and sense, raging wildly in that manner from shore to shore. But I ask myself sometimes, "Could your Frederic Wilhelm, your wisest Frederic, by the strictest government, by any conceivable skill in the art of charioteering, guide America forward in what is its real task at present—task of turning a savage immensity into arability, utility, and readiness for becoming *human*, as fast and well as America itself, with its very anarchies, gasconadings, vulgarities, stupidities, is now doing?" No; not by any means. That withal is perfectly clear to me this good while past. Anarchies, too, have their uses, and are appointed with cause. Our own anarchy here, ugliest of created things to me, do I not discern, as its centre and vital heart even now, the visibly increasing *hatred of mendacities*, the gradual and now rapidly spreading conviction that there can be no good got of formulas and shams; that these are good only to *abolish*, the sooner the better, toss into the fire and have done with them. True—most true! This also I see.'

In the course of the next ten years, he often said this, when appealed to for a curse on democracy by Froude and others.

'He spoke much on politics,' Froude reports, 'and on the

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 566-9.

characters of public men. From the British Parliament he was profoundly convinced that no more good was to be looked for '—at the time of speaking at any rate (a qualification which Froude missed) ; a time when a democratic Parliament, from its very nature, would place persons at the head of affairs increasingly unfit to deal with them. Bad would be followed by worse, till the very fools would see that the system must end.

'I reminded him,' Froude goes on, 'of the comment of Dion Cassius on the change in Rome from a commonwealth to an empire. In a democracy, Cassius says, a country cannot be well administered, even by accident, for it is ruled by the majority, and the majority are always fools. An emperor is but a single man, and may, if the gods please, be a wise one. But this did not please Carlyle either. The emperors that Rome got, and that we should be likely to get, were of the Copper Captain type, and worse than democracy itself.'<sup>3</sup>

'The hope, if there was hope, lay in a change of heart in the English people, and the re-awakening of the nobler element in them; and this means a recovered sense of "religion". They would rise out of their delusions when they recognised once more the sacred meaning of *duty*.'

## X

### A SUCCESSFUL DEDICATION

(1870)

IN the same month, Sir Arthur Helps, who entertained feelings of the deepest affection and gratitude, wrote, with reference to a new book of his: 'An infliction will come upon you in the course of the next three months. . . . I meditate dedicating to you my *Life of Cortes*, in a long epistle.'

He went on to say: 'I wish you would not talk about "a head growing grey". In the first place, I deny the fact: there is not enough hair left for anybody to say what colour it is. In the next, it would seem to insinuate that

<sup>3</sup> *Copper Captain*, from a bad shilling of copper silvered, long used for an impostor in office or title, and later monopolised as a nickname for Napoleon the Little in current English talk.

I am growing old, whereas I never felt so young as I do now. My troubles and my sorrows seem to have educed from me some latent juvenility to bear them.

'The next thing will be, that *you* will be pretending to be growing older, whereas I declare that I never found you more alive and more jovially—shall we say tempestuously—vigorous than when I last met you at dinner at our dear friend, Froude's.'<sup>1</sup>

The dedication was successful in the main point, and Carlyle confessed that he was very much gratified. 'It has in the very tone of it a beautiful simplicity and sincerity ; it puts on record, before I leave this world, a relation which was always gracious, cheerful, profitable and pleasant to me ; in short, it gives me more satisfaction than all the "dedications" that were ever made to me, or are likely to be.'<sup>2</sup>

Carlylean exaggeration, it may be ; but at any rate his feeling was sincere.

## XI

### A CALLER FROM EDINBURGH

(1870)

ARCHIBALD GEIKIE, a genial Edinburgh man of thirty-four—a 'gleg little man'—employed on geological survey work, was passing through London this month on his way to Italy, to study volcanoes in the Lipari Islands, with a view to comparing them with the extinct volcanoes to be found in Scotland, and he was brought by Alexander MacMillan to call at Cheyne Row. When the door opened, he saw Carlyle himself standing in the narrow hall, 'looking as if he would rather receive no callers'.<sup>1</sup> But as soon as he recognised MacMillan, he came forward, dressed in his familiar gown that reached his feet, and his black velvet cap, and with a long clay pipe in his mouth. He produced a supply of pipes and tobacco, but as his visitors did not wish to smoke, he led them upstairs to the drawing-room, where he sat between them in front of the fire, and was soon launched upon a criticism of Daniel Wilson's recent

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence of Sir Arthur Helps*, pp. 395-6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 308-9.

<sup>3</sup> *A Long Life's Work*, by Sir Archibald Geikie, pp. 132-4, 111, and 140.

biography of Chatterton, which he considered too flattering. He expressed the opinion that 'Chatterton never seemed to get into the essence and truth of things, but was more taken up with the roll, and the marching, and the trumpet-clang. He passed on to David Gray, the poor Scottish poet, who, he said, had something in him, but lost himself from the foolish desire to be famous. No one has any business to wish to be famous, but should be content to do his own work honestly and well. He enlarged on the "jackassery" of the world in its craving for novels.'

Thereafter he told of watching an Ordnance Survey long ago with Edward Irving on the Lomond Hills of Fife, and of the Natural History lectures of Professor Jameson in his student days, and when the conversation led round to the south-west, Geikie was able to tell him some anecdotes of Ayrshire lairds and clergymen, which evoked great peals of laughter; as indeed they well might, in witness whereof here is Geikie's best Ayrshire story, sure to be conspicuous on this occasion.

Elias Cathcart of Auchendrane had sold a good deal of his land to a millionaire ironmaster, James Baird, who had built his house of Cambusdoon upon it, near 'Alloway's auld haunted kirk'. He had been so devoted to his iron works and to money-making that he remained an ignorant man, even for a millionaire, but had conscience enough apparently to have occasional qualms about the system he had used of importing poor Poles whom he could sweat in order to keep down his workmen's wages in Scotland; and so as a kind of fire-insurance, since Hell-fire was not to be treated lightly even by a millionaire, he gave half a million pounds to the Church of Scotland. At a dinner in Cambusdoon there was much talk about the changes made in the world by the steam-engine, and Mr. Cathcart ruefully recalled the transformations apparent in the district, concluding: 'Well, if I were to come down fifty years after this, I daresay I would see just as much change again.'

'What's that ye say, Cathcart?' cried Baird. 'Come down! Take care ye haena to come up!'

He was terribly in earnest—and wondered why his words were greeted with a burst of laughter.

Carlyle seemed sorry when his cheerful visitors rose to take their leave, and he went down to the door with them, stopping several times on the staircase to ask Geikie questions about the rocks of Dumfriesshire. A few months later,

Geikie was present at a quiet dinner party at Professor Masson's, to meet Carlyle, and he notes : ' When the railway whistle reached his ear, he would then launch forth a torrent of vituperation on the noises that made life unendurable in a city. But he soon became vivacious again, and laughed, as only he could, at various Scotch stories that were told him.'

## XII

## THE DEATH OF DICKENS

(1870)

MARCH was saddened by the death, on the 20th, of Erskine of Linlathen, the good ' Saint Thomas', and other losses were impending. Life had become for Carlyle only a tranquil waiting for his own passing, which he could contemplate as a relief that could not now be long delayed.

His right hand had grown almost useless, shaking so badly that writing had become a heavy labour, and so depriving him of the power if not the will to work, although his niece became his devoted amanuensis, taking letters at dictation and helping him with the few tasks that still remained. ' Little Mary writes for me,' he told his brother ; ' but I cannot yet learn to write by dictation to her ; willing, swift, and eager as she is, poor little soul. She is a wise little thing, *honest* I think as spring water ; pretty to look upon ; and shines here like a small *taper*, slightly breaking the gloom of this my new *element*.'

As before, visitors came, friends delighting in his conversation, glad to do anything to lighten his settled melancholy ; and others, far less welcome, who sought mainly to do themselves the honour of having spoken with Carlyle. Of two such he wrote to his brother, in June :

' My two Hindoos yesterday, the Buhador and his son (a Cambridge student), were, apart from something of singularity, a *bore* and little else. They lasted above an hour, and (in my evil condition of body and nerves) did me visible mischief. The Papa is a bulky, gloomily serious, heavy kind of man, of European (i.e. Caucasian) features, and respectable expression ; about fifty,—a *sincere* Mahometan

(from Delhi) !—and what is worse, not able to speak three words of English, hardly to understand above *two* or so if the chances are favourable. He is writing a *Life of "Mohammed"*, has already printed 1 vol., which he gave me (done into English, but unreadable, huge, chaotic, full of Arabic citations, of Egyptian sandy darkness generally), which I mean to present to the London Library as the only refuge for it. The junior had a superficial knowledge of English, but a deep ignorance of all things European: had never heard of *Goethe*, could hardly be made to understand what Silvestre de Sacy's *Article on Mahomet* was, or even what the *Biographie Universelle* when I showed it to him. They begged each a Photograph; and the Senior, at going, not only bowed into quite a parabolic shape, twice over, but twice *kissed* my hand in a sort.'

Froude and Ruskin were frequent visitors, both welcome, and Alfred Lyttleton told of one call of Ruskin's 'in the old familiar room in Cheyne Row, with the old picture of Cromwell on the wall, and Mrs. Carlyle's little tables and pretty knick-knacks still in their quiet order.' Carlyle, of course, had not permitted anything in her room to be disturbed, and it remained always as it had been while she was alive. Ruskin had been ill recently, and as he talked on a subject on which he felt deeply, his eyes lit up, and he became agitated. Carlyle, seeing how moved he was, stopped him short. The topic was too moving. 'You must take care,' he warned him, with 'infinite kindness'. 'You will be making yourself ill once more.' Ruskin broke off at once, 'quite simply, like a child', acknowledging the wisdom of 'the Master's' words. 'You are right,' he said, and immediately changed the subject.<sup>1</sup>

On June 9, a sudden and wholly unexpected tragedy brought further gloom upon Carlyle. The day before, Dickens, after working as usual at his latest book, had a stroke, and died within twenty-four hours. Not long before Carlyle had heard him give one of his readings from his own works, and wrote: 'I had no conception, before hearing Dickens read, of what capacities lie in the human face and voice. No theatre-stage could have had more players than seemed to flit about his face, and all tones were present. There was no need of any orchestra.'

The two men had been united by strong ties. Dickens

<sup>1</sup> Ann Thackeray Ritchie, article on Ruskin, *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, Vol. LXXX (1889-90), pp. 594-5.

had honoured Carlyle above all other men, and they shared the same passionate anger against the manifold injustices of the age, to which their contemporaries for so long had been stubbornly blind. The brutalities and degradation Carlyle castigated so fiercely Dickens held up to public opprobrium in his novels, and both had the same passionate desire for immediate reform.

'It is almost thirty years,' Carlyle wrote now, 'since my acquaintance with him began; and on my side, I may say, every new meeting ripened it into more and more clear discernment of his rare and great worth as a brother man: a most cordial, sincere, clear-sighted, quietly decisive, just and loving man: till at length he had grown to such a recognition with me as I have rarely had for any man in my time. This I can tell you three, for it is true and will be welcome to you: to others less concerned I had as soon *not* speak on such a subject.'

To John Forster Carlyle also wrote.

'I am profoundly sorry for *you*, and indeed for myself and for us all. It is an event world-wide; a *unique* of talents suddenly extinct; and has "eclipsed", we too may say, "the harmless gaiety of nations." No death since 1866 has fallen on me with such a stroke. No literary man's hitherto ever did. The good, the gentle, high-gifted, ever-friendly, noble Dickens,—every inch of him an Honest Man.'<sup>2</sup>

### XIII

#### ON PRAYER

(1870)

'**W**HY is it,' Mrs. Luther once asked her husband, 'that in our old faith we prayed so often and so warmly, and that our prayers are now so few and so cold?'

It was easy for him to satisfy her, and prevent her from regretting the dreary 'tongue-threshing' of prayers by troops of monks and nuns at drill. That, he said, was but futile, 'a great torment' from which 'we are now delivered by the Gospel.' For Luther was clinging to the infallible Bible, a kind of lifeboat in the shipwreck of Superstition. Now, in

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Dickens*, by J. Forster, Vol. III.

1870, when the Bible had come to be as a tale that is told, the consideration was often present to emancipated and earnest minds, accustomed to collect their thoughts in prayer: 'Is prayer still possible without affectation?'

On 12.2.1869, Carlyle had written to Erskine of Linlathen: "'Our Father, which art in Heaven, Hallowed by Thy name, Thy will be done;" what else can we say? The other night in my sleepless tossings about, which were growing more and more miserable, these words, that brief and grand Prayer, came strangely into my mind, with an altogether new emphasis; as if *written* and shining for me in mild pure splendour, on the black bosom of the night there; when I, as it were, *read* them word by word—with a sudden check to my imperfect wanderings, with a sudden softness of composure which was much unexpected. Not for perhaps thirty or forty years had I once formally repeated that Prayer; nay, I never felt before how intensely the voice of man's soul it is; the inmost aspiration of all that is high and pious in poor human nature; right worthy to be recommended with an "After this manner pray ye."<sup>1</sup>

On June 4, 1870, George Duncan, a grandson of the Rev. Henry Duncan of Ruthwell, whose house had been so bright to Carlyle five and fifty years before, wrote to him from Edinburgh: 'There are repeated expressions in your works which convince me that in some form or other you believe in prayer, and the fact that the wisest men, Luther, Knox, Cromwell, and that greater Man whose servants they were, were pre-eminently men of prayer, is at variance with the thought which still forces itself upon me, that to attempt to change the Will of Him who is Best and Wisest (and what is prayer, if it is not that?) is in the last degree absurd. The only right prayer, it seems to me, is "Thy will be done"; and that is a needless one, for God's will shall assuredly be done at any rate. Is it too much to hope that you will kindly write me a few lines throwing light on this subject?'

Carlyle replied almost without delay.

'You need no apology for addressing me; your letter itself is of amiable ingenuous character; pleasant and interesting to me in no common degree. I am sorry only that I cannot set at rest, or settle into clearness, your doubts on that important subject. What I myself practically, in a half-articulate way, believe on it I will try to express for you.

<sup>1</sup> Undated newspaper cutting, from Mr. Oscar Gridley's collection.



' First, then, as to your objection of setting up *our* poor wish or will in opposition to the will of the Eternal, I have not the least word to say in contradiction of it. And this seems to close, and does, in a sense though not perhaps in all senses, close the question of our prayers being *granted*, or what is called "heard"; but that is not the whole question.

' For, on the other hand, prayer is and remains always a native and deepest impulse of the soul of man; and correctly gone about, is of the very highest benefit (nay, one might say, indispensability) to every man aiming morally high in this world. No prayer no *religion*, or at least only a *dumb* and lamed one! Prayer is a turning of one's soul, in heroic reverence, in infinite desire and *endeavour*, towards the Highest, the All-Excellent, Omnipotent, Supreme. The modern Hero, therefore, ought *not* to give up praying, as he has latterly all but done.

' *Words* of prayer, in this epoch, I know hardly any. But the act of prayer, in great moments, I believe to be still possible; and that one should gratefully accept such moments, and count them blest, when they come, if come they do—which latter is a most rigorous preliminary question with us in all cases. "*Can I pray* in this moment" (much as I may *wish* to do so)? "If not, then NO!" I can at least stand silent, inquiring, and *not* blasphemously *lie* in this Presence!

' On the whole, Silence is the one safe form of prayer known to me, in this poor sordid era—though there are ejaculatory words too which occasionally rise on one, with a felt propriety and veracity; words very welcome in such case! Prayer is the aspiration of our poor, struggling, heavy-laden soul towards its Eternal Father; and, with or without words, ought *not* to become impossible, nor, I persuade myself, need it ever. Loyal sons and subjects *can* approach the King's throne who have no "request" to make there, except that they may continue loyal. Cannot they?

' This is all I can say to you, my good young friend; and even this, on my part and on yours, is perhaps too much. Silence, silence! "The Highest cannot be spoken of in words," says Goethe. Nothing so desecrates mankind as their continued babbling, both about the speakable and the unspeakable, in this bad time!'

The shaking handwriting shows what an effort the letter

cost Carlyle, and how deeply he felt a reply at such length was called for. The 'Silence' he enjoins is not, indeed, the dumbness of stupidity, but the clear-eyed silence of the wise in face of what is inexpressible.

Duncan had also mentioned how various letters of Carlyle's to Robert Mitchell had come within his reach, and asked if Carlyle had now the slightest wish to see them again. 'I will not trouble you about the Mitchell letters,' came the reply. 'I wrote many letters to the good Mitchell; but I fear now they were all of a foolish type, fitter to burn than to read at present.'

#### XIV

#### TO SCOTLAND AGAIN

(1870)

BY the end of June, London had become unbearable. Lady Ashburton had proposed various schemes of escape, and was bent upon a sea voyage of some sort—to Norway, even to America. This was modified later to a yachting trip to the West Highlands, a project that, with Carlyle's love of the sea, and the benefit he always had from a voyage, might have proved highly successful. But it came to nothing. Instead, he wrote to Dumfries, inciting his brother to search out some suitable place where they could spend the summer together, enjoying the sea breezes and bathing. He had during the winter abandoned for a time his habit of taking a cold bath every day, and perhaps on that account he looked forward all the more keenly to being within easy reach of the sea.

Doctor John was assiduous in furthering his wishes, and made a thorough survey of the Galloway coast, and tentative arrangements for their holiday. Before the end of June Carlyle went north, to Dumfries first of all, while Lady Ashburton went on a tour of the Highlands. In July he spent five 'heavy-laden days' at Craigenputtock, fleeing from the unsupportable noise of the town, with its bustle and perpetual railway whistles. He found Craigenputtock 'inexpressibly sad . . . silent, empty, sorrowful and mournful as Death and the grave.'

While the doctor went over to Ireland, he continued to

Edinburgh, where Masson was waiting to meet him at the station, and next day went on to Haddington.

While he was in Scotland, Miss Bromley sent him *Ginx's Baby*, which he enjoyed reading—'capital in its way,' he told her, in returning it on July 11. 'The writing man is rather of penny-a-liner habits and kind, but he slashes along swift and fearless, sketching at arm's length, as with a burnt stick on a cottage wall, and sketches and paints for us some real likeness of the sickening and indeed horrible anarchy and godless negligence and stupor that pervades British society, especially the lowest, largest, and most neglected class; no legislator, people's William or official person, ever casting an eye in that direction, but preferring to beat the wind instead. God mend it! I perceive it will have to try mending *itself* in altogether terrible and unexpected ways before long, if everybody takes the course of the people's William upon it. This poor penny-a-liner is evidently sincere in his denunciation and delineation, and, one hopes, may awaken here and there some torpid soul, dilettante M.P. or the like, to serious reflection on what *is* the one thing needful at this day, in Parliament and out of it, if he were wise to discern.

'Alas! it is above thirty years since I started the Condition of England question as well worthy of considering, but was met with nothing but angry howls and Radical Ha, ha's! And here the said question still is, untouched and ten times more unmanageable than then. Well, well! I return you *Ginx*, and shut up my lamentations.'

## XV

### THE FRANCO-GERMAN WAR

(1870)

ON July 14 John Morley found Mill sitting in his garden, and told him the great news—that France had declared war upon Prussia. Mill struck his chair violently, and passionately cried: 'What a pity the bombs of Orsini missed their mark, and left the crime-stained usurper alive!'<sup>1</sup>

The astonishing course of the war had a profound effect upon Europe. Sedan was in September, by the middle of

<sup>1</sup> *Recollections of John, Viscount Morley*, I, p. 55.

which month Carlyle was home again, and to politicians enquiring what he anticipated, he pointed out at once: 'The Prussians will certainly keep for Germany what of Alsace and Lorraine is still German or can be expected to *re-become* such.' Contrary to his common habit, he took to reading the daily newspapers, following the progress of hostilities, although he felt no call to write about it.

Thiers appealed to London, to Vienna and St. Petersburg, in vain. Sir Bulwer Lytton in *The Times*, 25.9.1870, unconsciously absurd, implored interference to hinder unchristian and uncivilised horrors, although interference could only involve more horrors. There was not lacking an element in England itching for war; but the issue had fortunately been soon settled, and Gladstone was determinedly peaceable.

'What will become of France?' Carlyle asked himself in his *Journal*, on October 3. 'Paris shut up . . . undertaking to "stand siege!"; the voice of France a confused babblement from the gutters. This is her *first* lesson poor France is receiving. The state of England is almost still more hideous to all but the flunkies and the penny editors, and given up to a stupidity which the theologians might call judicial!'

Russia gave notice that she would no longer consider herself bound by the agreement to have no ships of war on the Black Sea, and for this our press proclaimed a war on Russia. 'Let us at least fight somebody!' was the plea. The satisfaction of sensible people with the Prime Minister's policy of peace was shaken by doubts of his strength, when he published an article to enlighten the world and naively supposed that it would remain anonymous. The secret was out in a few hours, as his biographer confesses.<sup>2</sup>

'Read Gladstone's article in the *Edinburgh Review* with amazement,' Carlyle noted. 'Empty as a *blown* goose-egg. Seldom have I read such a ridiculous, solemn, addle-pated *Joseph Surface* of a thing. Nothingness or near it conscious to itself of being greatness almost unexampled. Thanks to "parliamentary eloquence" mainly, and *its* value to oneself and others. According to the People's William, England, with himself atop, is evidently even now *at the top of the world*. Against bottomless *anarchy* in all fibres

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Gladstone*, by John Morley, Book VI, Chapter V, Vol. II, p. 345.

of her, spiritual and practical, she has now a completed ballot-box, can vote and count noses, free as air. Nothing else wanted, clearly thinks the People's William. He would ask you, with unfeigned astonishment, "What else?" "The sovereign'st thing in Nature is parmaceti (read ballot) for an inward bruise."<sup>3</sup> That is evidently his belief, what he finds believable about this universe, in England A.D. 1870. Parmaceti! Parmaceti! Enough of him and of it.'

Nevertheless Carlyle was afterwards able to co-operate with Gladstone in preventing war with Russia; for he recognised the fundamental fact that if Disraeli was a clever knave, Gladstone at any rate was *honest*.

Lecky had been on the Continent when war broke out, and getting back to London in September had much to tell to the discredit of the French in the first weeks of the war. To the woman he was to marry he confessed that although in general he disbelieved 'the doctrine of my old friend Carlyle that "might is right",' the present war appeared to justify it. He may have said something to this effect to Carlyle, and on October 3 reported to his sweetheart that he had had a walk with her prophet, Carlyle, who assured him that the result of the war was the most beneficent thing that had happened in the universe since he had been in it, and that it reminded him of how Sathanas went forth breathing boasting and blasphemy and Hell-fire, and St. Michael, with a few strokes of his glittering sword, brayed the monster in the dust.<sup>4</sup>

One Sunday about the middle of the month, Althaus came between two and three o'clock, to find Carlyle sitting in his gown in an armchair, reading, before the drawing-room fire. Althaus was full of the exciting news, and had long wished to call and discuss it, sure that the historian of Frederick would be following it all with sympathy.

'Yes,' Carlyle agreed, 'these are assuredly great events. I have always thought that Germany would either sink in chaos or awaken to new life with Prussia for a leader.'

Althaus's principal errand to-day was to get a few words in writing from Carlyle for a German lady who was compiling a book for the benefit of the widows and orphans of the war. Carlyle was silent for a while, and said at length: 'I do not see what I can do. There is nothing I could say which I have not already said. I wish the Germans well from the

<sup>3</sup> Shakespeare's *Henry IV*.

<sup>4</sup> *Memoir of W. E. H. Lecky*, by his wife, pp. 72-4.

bottom of my heart. They are a peace-loving, brave, industrious, firm and noble race, and surely they have endured long enough the arrogance and interference of the French. Oh, for more than three hundred years they have been tortured and exasperated. Francis I began the game, and then came the insufferable, meddling Louis XIV and Napoleon after him, and so on till now at last these French broke loose upon them exactly as the highwaymen on Bagshot Heath<sup>5</sup> used to hold their guns to their neighbours' faces, crying,—“Your money or your life!” Never was there a more innocent war. Never were victories more richly deserved than these German victories.’

Althaus was, of course, a German, writing in a German periodical; but even so he is to be credited, for Carlyle's view of the cause of war was the long historical one, not seeking the immediate incidents that preceded the outbreak of hostilities, and supplied the superficial reasons for it, but examining instead the slow development and progress of affairs of which a war between France and Germany was the inevitable culmination; and in the light of that there could be no question which nation was the aggressor.

Althaus explained that his request for some written declaration from Carlyle had special reference to Alsace and Lorraine. An English lawyer of high standing had supplied arguments for their annexation; would Carlyle give a short preface, introduction or letter? He described the good work his correspondent had done for the Red Cross Society.

‘Oh, yes,’ Carlyle said. ‘I remember the lady. Now let me hear what she writes.’

Althaus read her letter aloud, and, being given permission, went on to read the legal argument as well, with Carlyle attentively listening. It set forth clearly and in detail the reasons for annexation. When it came to the demand of the Republican Government that the German armies should evacuate France immediately ‘because the Republic cannot hold conversations with the intruder on their territory,’ Althaus laughed, and Carlyle joined him with a hearty peal of derision.

‘Good,’ he commented, when the reading was finished. ‘I agree entirely, and over and above the reasons given, a very good argument for the annexation is omitted. The people are of German race. They were torn asunder from

<sup>5</sup> Near Windlesham, Surrey.

Germany with violence, and most of them I believe are speaking German to-day.'

'That is so,' Althaus replied, 'and I think it may be easier than it looks to re-Germanise them.'

'I think so too. Everyone must be proud to be a German now. But I do not think it would help much for me to write about it,' Carlyle decided. 'We are mostly agreed. So far as I can discover, in England, not one man in a hundred is on the side of France; and the issue of the war is beyond debate—beyond the power of any outsider now to alter. I never knew sons of Adam so completely and hopelessly beaten as the French.'

Althaus agreed that 'such a complete collapse of the whole organisation of France was never heard of before. One can scarcely realise how low the people have sunk under the Second Empire.'

'Oh, I never doubted but it would come to that,' Carlyle declared. 'Of late I have often recalled how a hundred years ago they used to speak about "*Ce petit Marquis de Brandebourg avec lequel nous avons une espèce de guerre*,"—ha, ha! "*une espèce de guerre*", a kind of a war! Their Revolution wars were another story—assuredly there was a great deal of enthusiasm among the French then,—lofty ideals of Freedom and Brotherhood and a new social order,—and they had leaders. But now their most intelligent man, Victor Hugo himself, is talking the quintessence of nonsense about Paris. "*Queen of the Civilised World!*" I think there never was a more corrupt, abominable city, nothing but a brothel and a gambling Hell.' He laughed over the claim to pre-eminent '*esprit*', and called the Parisians 'a vain dancing-master sort of people.'

Discussing the probable effect of the war on Germany, he went on: 'Of course there is room for skilful diplomacy; but the unity of Germany is assured. I never expected to live to see such a swing round. If anyone had been able to guarantee it for fifty years hence, I would have been happy and content. But I am very glad I have lived to see it,—the greatest event in history since I was born.'

'The first political result,' Althaus predicted, 'will be a German Parliament to represent the newly constituted German people.'

'May be so,' Carlyle replied. 'But Parliaments, you know, I don't admire—they degenerate too easily into talking-machines.'

'There must be some kind of representative assembly,' Althaus objected, and Carlyle agreed, pointing out, however: 'I have certain ideas about bringing together the best men who could do business better than Parliamenters. The common Parliaments are useless, and make things worse than they find them. When the hour of danger arrives for England, it will not be the Parliament that will save her'—a prophecy that was amply fulfilled in our own day.

They went on to discuss the uplifting of Germany, Althaus quoting an Austrian saying that 'the Germans were endurable when they had only Goethe and Schiller; but now they have Bismarck and Moltke as well, there is no holding them.' Carlyle laughed, and said, 'Yes, and what a storm of indignation raged a few years ago about this very Bismarck. I always thought him the right man in the right place, and said so when I was in a minority of one. At first, indeed, I could not see why he was quarrelling with the Chamber; but discovered by and by. Our newspapers maintained he was like Strafford and Charles in their struggle with the Long Parliament; but it was nothing of the kind—the very opposite.'

To some comments on Bismarck with which he agreed, he added, 'We should remember too that Goethe and Schiller had their share in what is happening now. It was a great thing for the Germans to have such a language and literature as these men gave them, and it almost seems to me that they are not mindful enough. They seem not so grateful as they should be, at least not to Goethe. For a long time I have not seen a single essay or new book on Goethe, but I hear a great deal about a dirty, blaspheming Jew, Heinrich Heine. He has wit of a sort; but it would be shameful to put him in front of Goethe.'

Althaus did not forget this, and a while later came primed with details of the latest books on Goethe in Germany. At present he was prepared to tell the previous history of Moltke, and Carlyle was delighted to ask and listen, in the best of spirits. But when the visitor took himself off, it was with the feeling that there was no hope of getting from Carlyle any written declaration in favour of the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine.

On reflection, however, or on sight of fresh alarms and excursions in the press, Carlyle soon decided to publish his thoughts on the matter. In the autumn the *Weimar Gazette* had quoted extracts from a letter of his: 'Your anxieties



about the war must have been of short duration ; in fact they must after the first few days' practical experience have been changed into bright hope, into a hope increasing in rapid geometrical progression till it obtained its present dimensions. So far as my reading goes there never was such a war, never such a collapse of shameless vanity, of menacing, long-continued arrogance, into contemptible nothingness. Blow has followed blow as if from the hammer of Thor, till it lies like a shapeless heap of ruins, whining to itself, "In the name of all the gods and all the devils, what is to become of us?" All Germany may now look forward to happier days in a political sense than it has seen since the Emperor Barbarossa left it. My individual satisfaction in all this is great, and all England, I can say all the intelligent in England, heartily wish good fortune to brave old Germany in what it has accomplished—a real transformation into one nation, no longer the chaotic jumble which invited the intrusion of every ill-disposed neighbour, especially of that ill-disposed France which has inflicted on it such interminable mischief during the last four hundred years—wars heaped upon wars, without real cause, except insatiable French ambition. All that, through God's grace, is now at an end. I have, in my time, seen nothing in Europe which has so much delighted me. "A brave people," as your Goethe calls them, and, as I believe, a peaceful and a virtuous one. I only hope that Heaven will send them the wisdom, patience, and pious discretion to turn to a right use all that has been achieved.<sup>6</sup>

That the German nation was not vouchsafed the enlightenment that Carlyle hoped for was a tragedy which, however, could not dim the greatness of the achievement of the moment. Certainly the smashing defeat of the French armies displayed to the world an entirely new Germany, and Carlyle, in common with most serious-minded and far-sighted people in England, was anxious that we should be kept out of the quarrel, if only for the sake of justice. Lord Houghton has recorded a witty *mot* of Lady William Russell, in reply to the Duc de Broglie, who had said he had never believed until now that the British were a nation of shopkeepers. Lady Russell retorted promptly that she had always believed until now that the French were a nation of soldiers.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *Life of Thomas Carlyle*, by R. H. Shepherd, II, pp. 293-4.

<sup>7</sup> *Life of R. M. Milnes*, Lord Houghton, by T. Wemyss Reid, II, p. 251.

Carlyle eventually decided upon making public his own views, and for the first ten days of November he was busy hauling down his 'old forgotten books' and dictating to his niece the long letter that was printed in *The Times* on November 18. Reprinted hundreds of times and translated at once into many languages—it was in the *Moniteur* at full length—it had more immediate effect on affairs than any previous utterance of a pure man of letters. 'It would be impossible for us to improve on it,' said Bismarck's Busch.<sup>8</sup> The advice to sensible Frenchmen to acknowledge that their Government had done wrong, and accept the consequences, was clinched by a summary of the history of the last four hundred years—and it could not be disputed by men who knew their Michelet and Voltaire, and felt as Victor Hugo did about Napoleon the Little. As Mill wrote then to Morley<sup>9</sup>—and not many Frenchmen loved France better than they—'I am glad to see you have not yielded to the utterly false and mistaken sympathy with France. Stern justice is on the side of the Germans. Undoubtedly the real nation, the people, are guiltless, but they allow the talkers and writers to lead them. The peasantry of France, like the women of England, have still to learn that politics concern themselves.'

For several weeks letters rained on Cheyne Row,—'a much ado about nothing,' Carlyle told his brother. The pleasantest, if there had not been so many of them, were from grateful Germans, soldiers in the trenches and ambassadors, and women thankful to the peacemaker. This was Carlyle's first performance of the kind in current politics; but it surprised only those who did not know that he had cursed every war that was waged in his time.

The wisdom of what he wrote was none the less apparent because the political rulers of Berlin made a mess of the conciliation of the Alsatians and Lorrainers. These people had clung to German speech through generations of alien rule. By nature they were equal to any in the world. Yet they were treated as inferiors and strangers, not allowed to become German again, but forced to be Prussians or suffer the consequences—and they were not the sort who would be bullied into Prussianism. Many of the best of them went into exile. That blunder was to be bitterly regretted; but you cannot cure the wounds your arrows have made by

<sup>8</sup> *Bismarck*, by Dr. M. Busch, I, pp. 378-9.

<sup>9</sup> *Letters of J. S. Mill*, II, pp. 277-8.

merely unbending your bow. Prussia was supreme, and Zubern sabre-slashing was the order of the day. But no one, not even Carlyle, now an old man with his life's work all behind him, could have predicted the trend of affairs.

The spate of letters following the epistle to *The Times* kept him, and his niece as well, occupied for weeks to come. Many of them were merely glanced at, and those in German script he made no attempt to read, but passed on at once to his brother, who might discover something in them worth repeating. It was impossible to answer more than a very few, for dictation still presented an almost insurmountable difficulty. But one reply, to Herr Waldmuller, deserves quoting :

‘ Three nights ago there came to me from Dresden a beautiful little blue book, *Die tausendjahrige Eiche in Elsass*, which—especially as coupled with your kind inscription on the cover of it, bearing date “ vor Paris ”—I read with very great interest. . . . Nowhere have I seen a more ingenious arrangement of whatever was bright and human in an antiquarian study into a really living and artistic form than this of Elsass and its “ Thousand Years’ Oak ” ! That a soul capable of such work should now date to me from “ Le Vert Galant ”, and the heart of a great and terrible World-event, supremely beneficent and yet supremely terrible, upon which all Europe is waiting with abated breath, is another circumstance which adds immensely to the interest of the kind gift for me ; and I may well keep the little book in careful preservation as a memorial to me of what will be memorable to all the world for another “ thousand years.” I wished much to convey some hint of my feeling to you, as at once the writer of such a piece, and the worker and fighter in such a world ; and I try to contrive some way of doing so. Alas ! my wishes can do little for you or for your gallant comrades, nobly fronting the storms of war and of winter ; but if this ever reach you, let it be an assurance that I do in my heart praise you (and might even in a sort, if I were a German and still young, envy you), and that no man, in Germany or out of it, more deeply applauds the heroic, invincible bearing of your comrades and you, or more entirely wishes and augurs a glorious result to it at the appointed hour. My faith is that a *good* genius does guide you, that Heaven itself approves what you are doing, that in the end Victory is sure to you. Accept an old man’s blessing ; continue to quit yourselves like men,

and in that case expect that a *good* issue is beyond the reach of Fortune and her inconstancies. God be with you, dear sir, with you and your brave brethren in arms.'

## XVI

## CLOSE OF THE YEAR

(1870)

**A** PART from the excitement of the news of battle and its repercussions in Europe, life at Cheyne Row that winter went on placidly enough, with the good little Mary faithfully attending to her uncle's wants, anticipating his wishes where she could, and making herself as much as possible a new right hand for him. Visitors continued to drop in as before, and the deaths of several old friends cast their shadows upon the house.

One of these was of the sculptor Alexander Munro, who had called in October, found Carlyle not at home, and left his card, unfortunately without an address. Next day Carlyle hastened out in search of him, but it was the day after before he could trace him, by which time Munro had sailed for Antwerp. Learning soon after of Munro's death, from his father-in-law, Robert Carruthers, an old friend and contemporary, a Dumfries man and long an editor at Inverness, he wrote: 'He was much loved here, and has left a pathetically beautiful remembrance with many friends. It is perhaps a still better consolation that he left his widow and children provided for, and his house well set in order. To such a life we can piously say, well done, well done!'<sup>1</sup>

Amidst the jumble of letters in November came a stoically mournful little note from James Spedding, telling of the death of his good brother Thomas; and about the same time 'poor Foxton', 'near Ryader in Wales', died. 'Out of my own kindred,' wrote Carlyle to his brother, 'I had not two friends in the world who were so valuable to me.'

Among the welcome visitors was Turgenev, who came on November 25 and went walking with Carlyle in Hyde Park — 'unaltered, or altered for the better, plumper, taller, more stalwart than ever; only his head a little greyer. He was

<sup>1</sup> *Eight Unpublished Letters of Thomas Carlyle*, ed. by R. Garnett in the Brunswick magazine, *Archiv*, June, 1899, p. 329.

excellent company while we walked together ; talking about English Literature (his disappointment with our *recentiores*, our Brownings, Tennysons, Thackerays, Dickenses,—nay our Byrons and Shelleys),’ and, what was perhaps of more vital interest, giving a vivid account of his experiences in Baden at the beginning of the Franco-German war.

That year, the house in Cheyne Row had received the attentions of very different visitors—burglars who carried away the clock from the dining-room, which inspired Miss Thackeray with a graceful idea. She wrote to various lady friends of his, suggesting that they subscribe to buy him a new one, and on his birthday, December 4, when he called by invitation on Lady Stanley in Dover Street, he perceived through the fog that dimmed the drawing-room lights about a dozen well-known faces—Lady Ashburton, Lady Airlie, Miss Thackeray and her sister Mrs. Stephen, and eight more besides the hostess, who rose to receive him.

‘ Here is a little birthday present we want you to accept from us all, Mr. Carlyle,’ she said, and pushed towards him a table bearing the ticking clock and a paper of signatures. He was amazed and touched, and after a long pause could only say : ‘ Eh, what have I to do with time any more ? ’

The silence that followed was a trifle uncomfortable ; but the function was no fiasco, as Miss Thackeray, wishing she had had something cheerful ready for a rejoinder, felt at the moment ; she discovered that the old man was pleased and deeply grateful at this gesture of affection, and next summer he still spoke of it with appreciation to her sister.<sup>2</sup>

Two days later came a present from Samuel Carter Hall of Waterford, who in 1839 had founded the *Art Journal* and had then, with a clever wife from Wexford, been writing for his livelihood for many years. Mrs. Hall’s stories, *Sketches of Irish Character, Lights and Shadows of Irish Life*, &c., had been published, and by 1870 husband and wife had both reached threescore and ten and must have nearly finished the five hundred volumes which are credited to their joint account. The present was a Book of Memories, republished from the *Art Journal*, and Carlyle wrote warmly thanking him for his ‘ most kind and welcome gift ’ :

‘ I have spent all my leisure ever since on the book, and find it excellent, strangely interesting to me, and only regret

<sup>2</sup> Chapter from some *Memoirs*, by Anne Thackeray Ritchie, pp. 142–4 ; *Letters of Anne Thackeray Ritchie*, by her daughter, pp. 141–2 ; the ‘ paper of signatures ’ is in Carlyle’s House Museum, Chelsea.

to think I shall probably finish it this night. How strange, how grand and tragical, these silent Shadows of the Past, which were once living figures along with us in the loud, roaring Present, and whom we are so soon to join! You have done your work with insight, equity and charity. The book will be a charming guest at many Christmas firesides this year. . . . Please offer my thanks to Mrs. Hall, and say her little pieces seem to be particularly excellent, and have a kind of gem-like brightness, where all around them is polished and bright.’<sup>3</sup>

One of the many callers had an amusing experience with Mrs. Warren. The Duke of Argyle came with a print which he thought Carlyle would like to have, but had the misfortune to select the day on which the School-Board elections were being held. Mrs. Warren opened the door to him, gave him one withering look, and said curtly: ‘Mr. Carlyle is not going to vote to-day!’

Argyle realised the mistake at once, and handed over his card.

‘Take that to Mr. Carlyle,’ he replied. The good woman’s feelings may be imagined, and there were peals of laughter from the drawing-room when Argyle was shown up. There followed an invitation to dinner from the Duchess, and Carlyle ‘shudderingly felt’ he had to go. ‘But it all passed off harmlessly,’ he reported to his brother, ‘indeed beautifully; they sent their carriage for me, and I went and came as in a big ball of wool. There was an elegant little party (Howards, a Lord Lowndes, their own Lorne and pretty daughters); Flunkies were grave and solemn creatures in kilt and sporran. The Duke himself is a most kindly frank and intelligent man: I dined on a fraction of Venison, ditto of Grouse, came home without damage and was astonished to find I had been so cheerful.’

It has been a common mistake to suppose Carlyle essentially gloomy and taciturn. ‘One thing Froude did not give,’ writes his biographer, Herbert Paul.<sup>4</sup> ‘Carlyle was essentially a humourist. He laughed heartily at other people, and not less heartily at himself. When he was letting himself go, and indulging freely in the most lurid denunciations of all and sundry, he would give a peculiar and most significant chuckle which cannot be put into print. It was a warning not to take him too literally.

<sup>3</sup> *Retrospect of a Long Life*, by S. C. Hall, II, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Life of Froude*, by Herbert Paul, p. 425.

'He has been compared with Swift, but he was not really a misanthrope, and no man loved laughter more, or could excite more uproarious merriment in others. I remember a sober Scotsman, by no means addicted to frivolous merriment, telling me that he had come out of Carlyle's house in physical pain from continuous laughter at an imaginary dialogue between a missionary and a negro which Carlyle had conducted entirely himself.'

One of his favourite anecdotes, which he could tell with dramatic emphasis, was a true story of Dr. Gardner, a popular Edinburgh minister, who was called in to see a dying man. He found it difficult to give the patient suitable counsel owing to his dense ignorance, and hit upon the simple plan of offering a brief summary of the life and especially of the death of Christ. When he had finished the story of Calvary, the sick man heaved a deep sigh and said :

'They must hae been awfu' brutes. And ye say they did that to a guid man, tae?'

'Oh, yes, the best of men, Jesus Christ, the Son of God.'

'They must hae been awfu' brutes! But tell me, minister, did it happen in these parts?'

'Oh, no, it was in Palestine—a very long way off.'

'The villains! To dae that to a guid man! Was it in oor days?'

'Certainly not. Christ was crucified nearly two thousand years ago.'

'The brutes!' Then, after a pause, the dying man added, in a tone of relief: 'Weel, minister, seeing it happened sae far awa' and sae lang syne, we'll just be hoping it's no' true.'<sup>5</sup>

At Christmas, Lady Ashburton, of whom Carlyle had heard nothing for some time, sent 'as mute symbol, a Turkey pronounced to be excellent.' Of its quality, however, Carlyle remarked to his brother, 'one of us will never be able to judge except by testimony.' It is to be supposed it was welcome nevertheless.

About this time, there came two visitors who must have secretly amused Carlyle. He came into the drawing-room one afternoon to find two Americans sitting there, awaiting him, looking very correct and formal. One of them promptly jumped up at his entrance, and pointing to his companion

<sup>5</sup> Repeated by T. C.'s niece, Mrs. Alexander Carlyle.

said: 'Allow me, sir, to introduce my friend, Mr. So-and-so.' Wherewith he sat down, and the other rose and pointed to him, and said: 'Allow me, sir, to introduce my friend, Mr. So-and-so.' Then he too sat down.<sup>6</sup>

Carlyle also sat down, although what he thought is not recorded, and in a few minutes the visitors departed, highly delighted with themselves, and doubtless each was an authority on Carlyle for the rest of his life. 'And give me leave to say, sir, that a personal acquaintance, like myself, not to go so far as to say an intimate friend, knows what to think of a man he has seen and spoken to familiarly at home.'

It was probably also about this time that George H. Giddons wrote to Carlyle, begging his autograph, as a youthful enthusiast, and by return of post 'was made intensely happy by receiving the much-coveted lines,' although the words at first seemed very strange<sup>7</sup>:

'What was the first crime in this universe? Disobedience. Do not try mutiny till all other shifts are exhausted.'

After some years, these puzzling words seemed plain, and 'the key to all his teaching.'

## XVII

### BOSWELL ALLINGHAM

(1871)

IN 1870, 'poor little Allingham' had given up the Customs, and come to London as sub-editor of *Fraser's Magazine*. He regularly frequented Cheyne Row, and came to be spoken of as Carlyle's 'Boswell',<sup>1</sup> noting with satisfaction in his Journal: 'Mary tells me she said to her uncle, "People say Mr. Allingham is to be your Boswell," and he replied,—"Well, let him try it. He's very accurate."'

As an Irishman, he was friendly towards 'the brogue', and reports of a walk on January 26, that Carlyle remarked: 'Maclise was a quiet shy man with much brogue. His drawing of me in *Fraser* had a very considerable likeness,—done from life in Fraser's back-parlour in about twenty

<sup>6</sup> Told D. A. W. by the Misses Carlyle Aitken.

<sup>7</sup> G. H. Giddons in the *Christian World*, 7.2.1881.

<sup>1</sup> *William Allingham, A Diary*, pp. 202-3; also *Letters of C. E. Norton*, I, p. 423.



minutes.' It may have been in reference to Maclise, lately deceased, that he said, further: 'Ah, yes, he's out of this confused puddle that we must still go floundering in a while longer.'

The editorial mind grasped the opening thus offered—the 'future life' was a popular topic in the magazines then; but he got little satisfaction from Carlyle. 'We know nothing about Death and the Future, must leave all that alone. I often think of Kant's notion—that there is no real Time and Space, and these are only appearances—and think it is true. I have often had a feeling (contrary as it is to all logic) that there is a Special Providence,—a leading by the Hand of a great friendly Power above us.'

He went on to declare that Europe seemed determined to try the experiment of doing without a God. 'The world must be crucified and brought through extreme sorrow to a better mind.'

The talk turned on the Scots, and John Knox, and he cried: 'They are degenerate now—in *many* ways,' he added, laughing. 'The old-fashioned lairds used to get drunk for ten days at a time! Even Burns had a true sincerity—not like Tommy Moore.'

## XVIII

## VARIOUS FRIENDS

(1871)

**I**T was probably late in the sixties that a young Dumfries man, Balfour Browne, commencing lawyer in London, had a glimpse of Carlyle. He was being guided by old Aird to the site of the church where Bruce stabbed Comyn, and as they walked up the Kirkgate, they espied two old men, 'burdened with years', ahead of them—Thomas Carlyle and his brother, Doctor John. 'They walked on slowly in front of us past the old churchyard,' Browne related,<sup>1</sup> 'until they came to a narrow street which runs out of Kirkgate—"Burns Street". . . . Carlyle and his brother stopped opposite the house in which Burns lived and died, and as we saw them pause, Aird said,—"There they are looking at the shell of the tragedy!"'

<sup>1</sup> *Forty Years at the Bar*, by J. H. Balfour Browne, K.C., pp. 134-7.

In 1871 Mr. Browne had a novel published, and sent a copy to Carlyle, requesting leave to dedicate the next to him. He received in reply 'a very nice letter', in which Carlyle declared that he had 'found a good deal of talent in the book and would willingly accept the dedication of' his next novel, but advised him to devote himself to real work—advice which its recipient, albeit reluctantly, felt disposed to accept. It is probable, however, that professional work was not all that Carlyle intended to convey by the phrase, 'real work'. 'Oh, the bar, the bar,' he used to exclaim. 'I look upon it as a great devouring gulf that swallows all the strong men who should help us in our troubles.'

About this time, also, his niece Mary was 'strenuously busy about signatures for a Pension for poor Geraldine, which in the sickness of Forster and the laziness of Froude, Mary had had to undertake and has managed with great vigour and success.' He sent to Sir Charles Dilke, Radical and Republican Member for Chelsea, a memorial in favour of granting this Civil List pension, as Miss Jewsbury was also a resident of Chelsea.<sup>2</sup> Carlyle had to confess, however, that he had never voted at all, and their talk naturally turned on the days when the 'Reform Bill' was pending, and Carlyle was acquainted with the Member's grandfather.

On February 5, Milnes brought W. E. Forster, the minister who had engineered the Education Act, to call at Cheyne Row. Whatever its faults, the Act provided for the first time in history what Carlyle had been demanding for many years in vain, the teaching of most children in England to read and write and count.

'It was touching,' Milnes wrote to his wife,<sup>3</sup> 'to hear him tell the old man that if he ever did anything useful or notable, he owed it to the influence of his writings. I am sorry to say the Prophet cursed and swore a great deal, saying the Government might drag the nation down to hell, but he was not going with them, or with any Ministry that left the country with six guns, one torpedo, and a Cardwell,'—war across the Channel, and not even guns in readiness.

Apropos of the war, Professor Blackie dedicated to Carlyle a volume of *War-Songs from the German*, and received some commendation for the historical summary. 'The songs go thundering along with a furious tramp of battle in them ;

<sup>2</sup> *Sir C. W. Dilke*, by S. Gwynn and G. M. Tuckwell, I, p. 161.

<sup>3</sup> *Monckton Milnes, Lord Houghton*, by Wemyss Reid, II, p. 250.

and I suppose, if one could sing, would be very musical and heart-inspiring.'<sup>4</sup> To demonstrate that they were so indeed, Blackie may have tried a practical experiment. In April, as soon as he was free of lectures to students, he hurried to London, and 'fired off a rousing lecture on War to a Sunday evening audience.' A call at Chelsea was the most natural thing, and David Masson remembers being one day made the bearer of an explanation from Carlyle, that was in effect an apology to Blackie. 'I was lying asleep on the sofa the other day,' he said, 'when Blackie came in singing. On being so awakened, I fear I was perhaps not quite so polite to him as I should have been. I wish you would tell him I am sorry.'

The headlong Blackie had probably burst in singing his German battle-songs to display their inspiring merits.

## XIX

### C. G. LELAND 'CONTRADICTS'

(1871)

IN the season of 1870-71, a familiar figure in London society was C. G. Leland, a Rabelaisian American journalist, the distinguished producer of the then popular *Hans Breitmann* ballads, in the German-American variety of Pidgin English. Applied to by publisher Trubner, who undertook to provide the knowledge required, he wrote upon 'France, Alsace and Lorraine' an argument that Germany should take what she wanted, as France would do her 'very worst in any case.' According to himself, as set down in his *Memoirs*,<sup>1</sup> it was a performance which shook the world; for the German Embassy in London took six copies, *The Times* editorial said the same thing, 'omitting, I regret to say, to mention the source whence it was derived', and Bismarck used the identical argument to the French Commissioners for peace. Bismarck 'had *certainly* received the pamphlet', and could never, we are led to assume, have thought of such a thing himself.

Attracted by Carlyle, as one great man to another—there was indeed, as Leland was quick to see, a resemblance between them: both were lanky and bearded, had straight

<sup>4</sup> *John Stuart Blackie*, by A. M. Stoddart, II, p. 60.

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs*, by C. G. Leland (*Hans Breitmann*), II, pp. 257-8.

noses, and knew German—he appealed to Moncure Conway to arrange an interview. There was some delay, which Conway was forced to explain: ‘It was necessary to find out one or two matters before sending you to Carlyle.’ However, he was able at last to report: ‘If you will call upon him between two and three to-morrow, or the day after, or the day after that, he will be glad to see you. . . . It is probable that Carlyle takes his afternoon walk about three, and you will know by tact whether he wishes to have company—as is sometimes the case—or would walk alone. He will be glad to hear all you can tell him about Germany and the Germans.’

‘A visit to Royalty could not have called for more diplomatic handling,’ says Leland’s niece and biographer. ‘But my uncle, who was the most impatient of men with anything that he thought savoured of sham or pretension, was deference itself before genius, and he made no objection.’ He was rewarded. The visit was ‘a success’, with Carlyle ‘in a gracious mood, a walk in the park together’ for conclusion.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Leland, writing more than twenty years later, when no doubt much had suffered a *time-change*, and it had in any case become fashionable to be ‘smart’ at the expense of Carlyle, declared that he was almost awed by the old man’s ‘extraordinary likeness to my late father. In iron-grey grimness and never-to-be-convinced expression of the eyes they were identity itself.’ For some time Carlyle talked ‘Latter-Day Pamphlets’, then abruptly asked him what sort of an American he was, German or Irish or what; to which the visitor replied:

‘Since it interests you, Mr. Carlyle, to know the origin of my family, I may say that I am descended from Henry Leland, whom the tradition declares to have been a noted Puritan, and active in the politics of his time, and who went to America in 1636.’

It was the habit then for Americans to have ancestors who ‘came over’ with the Puritans, exactly as it has long been customary for neo-aristocrats in Britain to trace themselves back to one or other of the Conqueror’s valiant knights, so that Mr. Leland was probably proud of his genealogy, which had the unusual merit of authenticity. Carlyle, however, was not impressed.

<sup>2</sup> C. G. Leland, a Biography, by Mrs. E. R. Pennell, II, pp. 10-11; and see Leland’s *Memoirs*, II, pp. 292-8.

'I doubt whether any of your family have since been equal to your old Puritan great-grandfather,' he is reported as saying, presumably inferring that America had achieved nothing comparable to Cromwell's Revolution. But Mr. Leland had a swift inspiration.

'Mr. Carlyle,' he cried, 'I think that my brother, Henry Leland, who got the wound from which he died standing by my side in the war of the rebellion, fighting against slavery, was worth ten of my old Puritan ancestors; at least he died in a ten times better cause. And allow me to say that in all matters of historical criticism you are principally influenced by the merely melodramatic and theatrical.'

Carlyle, 'amazed and startled, though not at all angry,' exclaimed:

'What's that ye say?'

'I say, Mr. Carlyle, that . . . in all historical judgments you are influenced only by the melodramatic and theatrical.'

'No, no, I'm not that,' replied Carlyle, 'deeply reflective and not displeased, and with a grim smile as of admiration' in the retrospective mind's eye of his interviewer, who was probably treated tenderly on account of his brother.

'It was the terrier who had ferociously attacked the lion, and the lion was charmed,' Leland goes on. 'From that instant he was courteous, companionable, and affable, and talked as if we had been long acquainted, and as if he liked me. The resemblance to my father during the row was appalling, the difference being that my father never gave in.'

Froude appeared, and all three went walking in the Park. 'Pausing on the bridge, Carlyle called my attention to the very rural English character of a part of the scenery in the distance, where a church-spire rises over ranges of tree-tops. I observed that the smoke of a gypsy fire and a tent by a hedge was all that was needed. Then we began to talk about gypsies, and I told him that I could talk Romany, and ran on with some reminiscences.'

Conway told Leland that he might return, but he confessed that he had not enjoyed his call sufficiently to wish to repeat it, and he went no more, although he felt that he was indeed the kind of friend that Carlyle needed. 'With somebody to "sass him back", Carlyle would have been cured of his dyspepsia, and have lived twenty years longer'—which would have brought him beyond a hundred and

five. However, Bulwer-Lytton and bric-à-brac were more in Leland's line, although he is perhaps the most amiable of the crowd of fictioneers who have flattered folly by caricaturing Carlyle. At least he was quite sincere.

## XX

## TURGENEV AT CHELSEA

(1871)

ON February 2, Allingham went round to Cheyne Row, to find Miss Bromley also there, and at ten o'clock came Turgenev, the Russian novelist, who had more to tell of his experiences in Baden when the Franco-German War broke out, and explained that he had come to London to assist two French friends. The conversation turned naturally upon Russia, where, Turgenev claimed, everyone spoke good Russian, not French. Allingham was very favourably impressed: 'He speaks well,' he noted in his *Diary* afterwards; 'softly, naturally, tellingly, politely. A big strong man, over fifty (53), about 6½ feet, good linguist, and curious about English literature of the time.'

He bore a handsome head erect upon broad shoulders, with regular features, straight penetrating eyes, copious hair and full round beard, beginning to grow grey—a worthy peer of Carlyle. 'When Gogol is melancholy,' Brandes remarks, 'it is from despair; Dostoievsky, sympathy for the down-trodden; Tolstoy, religious fatalism. Turgenev alone is a philosopher. He loves man, even though he does not think much of him, and does not trust him very much.' This might be blame, but is in effect the reverse; the Russian proverb says: 'Love me when I'm dirty—anyone will love me when I'm clean.'

It was not wholly for pleasure that the Russian aristocrat had elected to live in the West. In 1852 he had been arrested, and exiled from Moscow, because he supplied to a Moscow paper a short obituary notice of the glorious Gogol, the Russian Dickens, who had persistently and relentlessly poured ridicule upon officialdom. 'Any tradesman might have had a better,' Turgenev said of the notice, but the Petrograd Censor found it amiss, and in a despotism of clerks, which must maintain itself by mendacity, the one

unpardonable sin is to cast doubt on official infallibility. Some influential friends are said to have saved Turgenev with difficulty from Siberia, and he took care to keep himself safe in future without relinquishing his work of 'holding the mirror up to nature' as he had seen it. He was one of the bright spirits who demonstrated the absurdity of serfdom, which came to an end in 1861, and his conversation must have confirmed Carlyle in his liking for Russians.

He was in distress over a volume of Rossetti's poems which some one had sent him, and which he produced. It filled him with despair, because he had thought he understood English, but found he could not grasp the meaning of a rather minor modern poet. Allingham was a friend of Rossetti, and was interested. The book in question had a queer history. The poet, who had made a love match, had had a tiff with his wife one day, and had gone out, whereupon in the heat of the moment she took an overdose of some narcotic, and was dead when he came home. In his infinite despair and remorse, he placed the manuscript of an unpublished volume of poems in her coffin. Some years later, the coffin was raised, and the manuscript recovered and published.

Carlyle took the book and glanced through it; but in a little he was able to comfort the Russian by exclaiming: 'I cannot understand it!' Allingham protested that the mysticism made common ideas very poetical, to which Carlyle rejoined: 'It might be questioned whether the ideas were worth digging out of the mysticism.'

Turgenev, himself a landowner in Russia, told a romantic story of real life, of two men who planned to murder a landowner whose tyranny and cruelty had become insupportable. They agreed to cast lots for the honour of committing the deed, but an old man dissuaded them, quoting scripture: '"Vengeance is mine," saith the Lord.' The tyrant was murdered shortly afterwards, and the old man arrested. When he was being tried for the crime, the other two came forward and described how he had dissuaded them; but the prisoner said: 'I did it. They are young, with wives and children depending on them, while I am old, and ready to die.'

In describing his native land, Turgenev emphasised the remarkable similarity of all the inhabitants. You could not, he maintained, tell a peasant from a nobleman by talking with him. The great plains, the absence of moun-

tains, and the uniformity of the very grain, were offered to illustrate, or perhaps explain, this similarity—which, along with the free circulation of the people which vast plains make possible, may account for the same characteristic in China.

## XXI

## WOMEN AS DOCTORS

(1871)

AN Edinburgh medical student who had been a supporter of Carlyle's candidature in the Rectorial election of 1865 wrote to ask his opinion upon a subject then coming to be much discussed, the entrance of women into the medical profession. Carlyle replied at some length, on February 9 : ' It is with reluctance that I write anything to you on this subject of female emancipation, which is now rising to such a height, and I do it only on the strict condition that whatever I say shall be private, and nothing of it gets into the newspapers. The truth is, the topic for five-and-twenty years past, especially for the last three or four, has been a mere sorrow to me, one of the most afflicting proofs of the miserable anarchy that prevails in human society ; and I have avoided thinking of it except when fairly compelled. What little has become clear to me on it I shall now endeavour to tell you. In the first place, then, I have never doubted that the true and noble function of a woman in this world was, is, and for ever will be, that of being a wife and helpmate to a worthy man, and discharging well the duties that devolve on her in consequence, as mother of children and mistress of the household—duties high, noble, silently important as any that can fall to a human creature—duties which, if well discharged, constitute woman, in a soft, beautiful, and almost sacred way, the queen of the world, and which by her natural faculties, graces, strengths and weaknesses, are every way indicated as specially hers. The true destiny of a woman, therefore, is to wed a man she can love and esteem, and to lead noiselessly, under his protection, with all the wisdom, grace, and heroism that is in her, the life presented in consequence. It seems furthermore indubitable that if a woman miss this destiny, or have renounced it, she has every right



before God and man to take up whatever honest employment she can find open to her in the world. Probably there are several or many employments, now exclusively in the hands of men, for which women might be more or less fit—printing, tailoring, weaving, clerking, &c. That medicine is intrinsically not unfit for them is proved from the fact that in much more sound and earnest ages than ours, before the medical profession rose into being, they were virtually the physicians and surgeons, as well as sick-nurses, all that the world had. Their form of intellect, their sympathy, their wonderful acuteness of observation, &c., seem to indicate in them peculiar qualities for dealing with disease, and evidently in certain departments (that of female disease) they have quite peculiar opportunities of being useful. My answer to your question may be that two things are not doubtful to me in the matter:—

‘1. That women—any woman who deliberately so determines—have a right to study medicine, and that it might be profitable and serviceable to have facilities, or at least possibilities, offered them for so doing.

‘But (2). That, for obvious reasons, female students of medicine ought to have, if possible, female teachers, or else an extremely select kind of men; and in particular, that to have young women present among young men in anatomical classes, clinical lectures, or generally studying medicine in concert, is an incongruity of the first magnitude, and shocking to think of to every pure and modest mind. That is all I have to say, and I send it to you under the conditions above mentioned, as a friend for the use of friends.’

The letter was printed and reprinted in many newspapers about twenty years afterwards, and considerably influenced the grave deliberations of academic authorities on the question of admitting women to the faculty of medicine.

## XXII

## SUMMER IN THE NORTH

(1871)

CARLYLE'S niece Mary had proved a great help to him, looking after him generally and being of particular service as a sort of secretary, to attend to his corres-

pondence, which continued voluminous, and now and again to relieve him of the labour of writing. 'You have no idea what a *time* this scribble has cost me,' he wrote to his brother; '—almost as if I had been *engraving* it, say on lead! This loss of my hand is the worst of all I have had for the years that have now fled since 1866. It completely disfurnishes my life; makes real "employment" impossible in it: I perceive too well I shall never learn to write by "dictation"; it is as if one were learning to "laugh through wool".' Later he made a pathetic attempt to use a slate, but it proved of little more use than a 'laced-wristikin' that was 'not worth a doit'.

'Mary,' he told his brother on March 25, 'is very good and kind, poor little soul; has been up three times in the hollow of the night ministering to me like a beneficent little Fairy: yesterday she had from Lady Ashburton a shining testimony of that Lady's about her, which I doubt not is rather agreeable to the little wretch;'—a gift of a gold watch—'but I leave her to report the thing to her own Mother (as of course she will do in a day or two), having no authority of my own to speak of such matters. She has already done out of her own little head four Letters for me to correspondents requiring nothing but second hand; and had just got done five minutes before I was set down at this door.'

In May Carlyle was at Melchet Court, 'sitting, walking, being driven through the New Forest sceneries and (one day) riding a too fiery horse in hope of benefit from that variety of inaction, which, however, I have not repeated hitherto. Turgenev came duly on Monday; but unhappily had to go again on Wednesday morning; I say unhappily, not only because he is really a friendly, intelligent man, a general favourite with high and low, but because he entirely relieved me from any labour of talking,—being himself a most copious and entertaining talker,—by far the best I have ever heard who talks so much.'

As always, Lady Ashburton had the wisdom to leave him as much as he desired to his own devices, and not to burden him with the necessity for being sociable unless he felt in the mood; and the visit was a success. 'The clear air, the sometimes shining skies, the great *sough* of the woods, the otherwise entire silence; all that comes to me with an unspeakable welcome; and, though steeped in sadness, all of it is a real blessing to me. I can add no

more except that our treatment here is supreme ; and that Mary is a first favourite with everybody.'

In July he joined his brother John, and they went by steamer to Aberdeen, whence Carlyle went on to spend August with Lady Ashburton at Loch Luichart. His hostess was described by another visitor<sup>1</sup> as a 'centre of myths. Though stout, she had a commanding presence, with fine eyes and an aquiline face like a Roman Empress.' But she was constantly changing her servants, who perhaps did not revere aquiline faces and commanding presences sufficiently, and she had often to make use of the local hotel in emergency. More than once she had more visitors invited than rooms to accommodate them ; but the hotel-keeper was well pleased and came to consider himself and his staff as her supernumeraries. 'Just a bonnie Highland lassie,' Carlyle called her when talking to Augustus Hare, 'a free-spoken and open-hearted creature as ever was.'

She had a deep and sincere affection for the old man, which, however, did not always save him from the consequences of some of her harmless eccentricities, one of which was a certain unpunctuality at dinner. In Rome she had once kept Royalty waiting for a full ten minutes. Once when Carlyle was her guest she did not reach the table until after ten o'clock, so that Mary Aitken became perturbed, knowing that her uncle could digest nothing unless taken at his customary hour. In vain she urged him to begin without their hostess. 'The thing was not to be thought of !' Lady Ashburton arrived at length, as pleased and happy as if she had been on the stroke of time ; and Carlyle for his part avoided causing her any embarrassment or distress by simply contriving to go dinnerless unobserved. He ate so little at any time that this was always easy, and his talk made one forget to think of food in his company.

On Friday, August 11, Lady Ashburton took him for a twenty-six-mile drive to the house of a Mr. Fowler, at Braemore, Ross-shire, where Professor Richard Owen was rustivating. They took tea, and strolled along the easier walks, and Carlyle entered his name in the Visitors' Book painfully, in pencil. Lady Ashburton explained to Owen that it was mainly Carlyle's wish to see him that had brought them so far, and writing to his wife he mentioned

<sup>1</sup> *Notes from the Life of an Ordinary Mortal*, by A. G. C. Liddell, p. 305.

this, and added: 'He is much emaciated, can digest but little, and hardly gets any sleep. He was most friendly and, I thought, took his last leave of me at parting.'<sup>2</sup>

## XXIII

## CONWAY BRINGS JOHN BURROUGHS

(1871)

ONE evening in the autumn, Moncure Conway brought John Burroughs, the laureate of American birds, to call at Cheyne Row. Carlyle was out having his after-dinner walk when they arrived, most of his walking and riding being done after dark, but he came in presently, wearing a long grey overcoat that reached nearly to the floor.

'His greeting,' Burroughs noted,<sup>1</sup> 'was quiet and grandfatherly. I shall never forget the impression of his large, long, soft hand in mine, nor the look of sorrow and suffering stamped on the upper part of the face—sorrow mingled with yearning compassion. The eyes were bleared and filmy with unshed and unshedable tears. In pleasing contrast to his coarse hair and stiff, bristly, iron-gray beard, was the fresh delicate colour that just touched his brown cheeks. I noted a certain shyness and delicacy, too, in his manner. He leaned his head upon his hand, the fingers thrust up through the hair, and with his elbow resting upon the table looked across to my companion, who kept the conversation going. This attitude he hardly changed during the two hours we sat there. How serious and concerned he looked, and how surprising that hearty, soliloquising sort of laugh which now and then came from him as he talked. If that laugh could have been put in his *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, where it would naturally come, or in his later political tracts, these publications would have given much less offence.'

In August a monument had been set up in Edinburgh to Sir Walter Scott, and Carlyle had been invited to take part in some ceremony connected with it. He had refused, however. 'If the angel Gabriel had summoned me,' he told Burroughs, 'I would not have gone. It was too soon

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Professor Owen*, by Rev. R. Owen, II, pp. 209-10.

<sup>1</sup> *Fresh Fields*, by John Burroughs, Chapter X, pp. 275-81.

to erect a monument to Scott. Let them wait a hundred years.'

He had never met Scott. His closest contact with him had been once long ago when he had been charged with a message for him from Goethe, and in some trepidation had gone to call, infinitely relieved when he found that the great man was not at home. Shortly afterwards he saw him in the streets of Edinburgh. A large carriage, drawn by several horses, and full of people, came along, and there, laughing and chatting, 'like a great boy', sat Sir Walter. 'To myself Scott was never of heroic quality,' he had told his brother, on 10.2.71; 'and seems to be far too young yet for centenary operations.'

Carlyle was now recently back from Scotland, and 'full of sad and tender memories of his native land.' He described how the sight of the 'blooming lasses' and crowds of young people in the streets of Aberdeen had filled him with sadness. But Burroughs amused him by telling how the English sparrow had been introduced into America.

'Introduced!' Carlyle echoed, laughing. He feared they would soon regret the introduction of that 'comical little wretch'. The London house sparrow was impudent as could be, and would hardly get out of one's way. He 'imitated its pert look and popping up of its head quaintly.' He described the dignified unconcern of a cat passing close to about five hundred of them chattering away about their affairs, and reminded them of the Arabian legend that the temple of Solomon was erected under the chirping of thirty thousand sparrows, 'all met to give a joint approval of the project.'<sup>2</sup>

Burroughs had been very much disappointed at his failure to hear the English nightingale, and apparently he mentioned this, for Carlyle astonished his visitors by his knowledge and love of birds. 'The mavis,' Conway reports, 'he thought next to the nightingale in song, and then came the blackbird—"not of that species noted for his accomplishment in picking holes in things." The lark, though monotonous, is always pleasing. He found it a kind of welcomer wherever he went. The linnet was a pleasant bird.' He went on to comfort Burroughs by telling how Leigh Hunt had often sent him here and there to listen to the nightingale, and how he did so for long in vain. But eventually he heard a song which he recognised from

<sup>2</sup> *Autobiography*, by Moncure Conway, II, pp. 101-2.

Goethe's description, and he compared the poet to it—'a voice sounding amid the din like the nightingale—touching and strong.' It was not sad, yet pathetic and somehow piercing. He listened to it for a quarter of an hour, but never heard it again. The nightingale was fast disappearing from the neighbourhood of London, although he had heard of one lately in the Green Park. It is not found farther north than the lower part of Yorkshire, and is of course unknown in Scotland.

So Burroughs was consoled for hearing so little of the nightingale, and returned shortly to America to write *Fresh Fields*. Some years later, Edward Carpenter had gone across to visit Walt Whitman, and on his way down the Hudson stayed with Burroughs a night or two. They had a long walk in the primitive woods behind his house, while he talked of Whitman and bird-lore—'a tough reserved farmer-like exterior, some old root out of the woods, one might say—obdurate to wind and weather—but a keen quick observer close to nature and the human heart, and worth a good many Holmes and Lowells.'<sup>3</sup>

## XXIV

## BIOLOGY AND HUMANITY

(1871)

FROM 1867 John Tyndall had been living in Albemarle Street, as Superintendent of the Royal Institution, within reach of Chelsea, and Carlyle, calling one day, found him busy upon some experiments, and was shown what was probably his best work, the successful attempt to prove that not even the humblest form of life can come from matter not alive.

Tyndall sought to bring physical methods to bear, which should 'abolish the doubt and confusion then existing'. He had prepared chambers of air self-purified by the subsidence of all floating motes, so that even the most highly concentrated sunbeam passing through it was invisible, and to this air infusions of meat, fish, fowl, and vegetables were exposed. They were found to be incapable of putrefaction. The vital oxygen was still there, but since the floating motes,

<sup>3</sup> *My Days and Dreams*, by Edward Carpenter, pp. 89 and 90.

representing the seminal matter in the atmosphere, had been removed, the power of generating putrefaction had gone. This showed that there was no spontaneous generation, and that the organisms required the antecedent seed before they could develop.

Carlyle was intensely interested when Tyndall took him into one of the specially heated rooms where the chambers of pure air were kept. It was all entirely new to him, for microbes, bacilli, and bacteria were words known then only to scientists, and not in current popular use. Tyndall went on to amaze him by following his line of reasoning from putrefaction to antiseptic surgery, and thence to the germ theory of communicable disease. Carlyle's conception of life as wholly mystical, incapable of explanation, had made him antipathetic to much of the experiments of contemporary science, but Tyndall's revelations fell so patly with his own beliefs that he was deeply impressed and pleased. That life must be derived from antecedent life, and was incapable of generation from dead matter, was merely a scientific postulation of his own convictions.

Presently Tyndall took him upstairs to an armchair and a cheerful fire, and a tumbler of mulled claret. He produced a packet of ragged foolscap sheets, yellow with age and tied by twine, which he had come upon a fortnight before while rummaging through a mass of ancient papers. They contained an analysis and summary of *Past and Present*, done very many years before. As Tyndall read aloud from this or that, Carlyle listened eagerly, sometimes commenting, but often 'breaking forth into loud and mellow laughter at his own audacity.'

The eviscerated *Past and Present* produced a great deal of amusement; but presently Carlyle became serious and earnest.

'Well,' he commented finally, in 'a voice touched with emotion'—'what greater reward could I have than to find an ardent young soul, unknown to me, and to whom I was personally unknown, thus influenced by my words.'<sup>1</sup>

After he had finished his claret, they walked together down Albemarle Street into Piccadilly, his 'tough old arm' in Tyndall's. There he was safely put on board a Brompton bus, whose conductor probably knew him well by sight, for this was his favourite means of getting about when walking was out of the question.

<sup>1</sup> *New Fragments*, by John Tyndall, pp. 350-2.

## XXV

## AT SIR HENRY TAYLOR'S

(1871)

A. G. C. LIDDELL, then a young lawyer of twenty-five, son of a neighbour at Sheen of Sir Henry Taylor, Civil Servant and poet, professed a great admiration for Carlyle, as had become fashionable, and accordingly Lady Taylor invited him to dinner to meet his hero. Taylor, 'magnificent-looking', a perfect gentleman, and in every way a man of distinction, appeared to his youthful guest 'a tall old man, though he had rather a stoop, with a very fine head and a long grey beard, and a somewhat languid, dreamy expression. His voice and ways were attractive, though . . . he could not pronounce his r's, and his diction was somewhat high-flown. He could make himself very agreeable, and was popular with my mother and the other ladies of Sheen, while the men were inclined to scoff at his unlikeness to the ordinary type.' His cape and wideawake were, of course, 'an uncommon get-up.' This winter he had accepted a knighthood and was about to retire.

Carlyle Liddell found 'old and shrunken, with a great shock head of grey hair and bright eyes.' At dinner he was not near enough to hear the conversation, but after the ladies had retired he moved up, and listened eagerly to his 'vivid and picturesque stories, which came out one after another, quite silencing Sir John Coleridge, who had a great reputation as a raconteur.' After they joined the ladies, however, the story-teller 'merged in the prophet, a much less interesting phase. He sat in an armchair surrounded by all the women of the party, some literally sitting at his feet,' which must have been rather irritating to a handsome young man of twenty-five, who might therefore be forgiven if he thought the ladies indiscriminating, and felt with a gentleman in Homer that the present generation was a great improvement on its predecessors. At any rate, Mr. Liddell promptly lost much of his Carlylean enthusiasm.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Notes from the Life of an Ordinary Mortal*, by A. G. C. Liddell, pp. 123-4.



## XXVI

## TALKS WITH ALLINGHAM

(1871)

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM reports a number of interesting conversations which he had with Carlyle this year, generally when they were out walking. One day in June, in Battersea Park, Carlyle told of an old pauper, a 'bandster', who sang Border Ballads in the Annandale dialect, which he imitated for Allingham's benefit. He had an amusing story, too, of an ignorant old Scotswoman who, speaking of some family, declared, 'There's taw sons, baith doin' weel in Glasgie; tane's an Impostor, and t'ither's a Malefactor,' which was her way of saying 'upholsterer' and 'manufacturer'!

Recalling that the longest day had been passed once more, 'A day,' he mused, 'how strange! A year—where is it gone? Time—is it real, or not? Kant says it is but our way of seeing things. I can conceive this, but am not able entirely to accept the thought. "Forty years make great odds in a lass"—ah, that's true enough.'

On another occasion he spoke of the Rev. W. Elwin's edition of Pope, and exclaimed that it was an absurdity so to run down his author all the way. The notion that Pope was a systematic liar was nonsense. 'His mendacities about his writings mattered nothing or next to nothing at all; were merely like those of a young lady who says no when she means yes.'

Discussing Shelley and Keats, he declared that 'Keats wanted a world of treacle!' Browning's *Balaustion* he had read twice through and found out the meaning of. 'Browning most ingeniously twists up the English language into riddles—"There! there is some meaning in this—can you make it out?" I wish he had taken to prose. Browning has far more ideas than Tennyson, but is not so truthful. Tennyson means what he says, poor fellow! Browning has a meaning in his twisted sentences, but he does not really go into anything, or believe much about it. He accepts conventional values.'

He found considerable beauties in *Ossian*, and recollected having read *Roderick Random* with immense delight. He praised White's *Life of Swedenborg*, and ventured the opinion

that there was a prurient element in the Great Swede, for whom he had never cared, that accounted for much.

In the winter months, he had been re-reading Shakespeare, with renewed delight, and coming to discuss him said emphatically: 'The longer I live, the higher I rate that much-belauded man.' He recited 'The cloud-capt Towers' passage, and dwelled solemnly once more on:

We are such stuff  
As dreams are made on, and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep.

He quoted Richter—'These words created whole volumes within me.'

'At no time,' Allingham comments, 'did Carlyle show himself so happy and harmonious as when talking on some great literary subject with nothing in it to raise his pugnacity. The books and writers who charmed his youth—to return to these was to sail into sheltered waters.'<sup>1</sup>

Once he said: 'Writing is an art. After I had been at it some time I began to perceive more and more clearly that it is an art.'

## XXVII

### THE NEW YEAR

(1872)

NEW YEAR'S DAY was bright and beautiful when Allingham called with greetings, but Carlyle, for whom life had been robbed of all interest now that he had no longer any work left to accomplish, would only say: 'I don't expect it to be a better one than last, rather worse.'

'Every creature can have but its own life—no more than that?' Allingham questioned eagerly.

'Yes, that is the case.'<sup>1</sup>

But however gloomy his feelings, Mary was able to report to Miss Ann Welsh, when she wrote that day: 'Uncle has not suffered much either in want of sleep or otherwise this winter; and I hope as the darkest part of the winter is now past he may keep as well as he is at present. He looks very fresh and well in face; but he does not look as firm and

<sup>1</sup> *William Allingham, A Diary*, pp. 204-6.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 207.

strong on his feet as he used to do, though he still continues his long afternoon walks ; indeed, his chief complaint is his shaking right hand ; he says it is like having his work-arm broken, for he never will learn to write at dictation.'

He had, however, attempted some small undertakings, in conjunction with his niece, not for publication, but ' only as a pastime ', since he liked to feel that he was keeping up his old habit of working every day. This was the translation from the German of an Icelandic *Saga*, which he dictated to Mary, and which she copied with scrupulous care. It was completed in the middle of December, 1871, and all that remained was a short Preface yet to be done.

' The labour I know well enough to be worth in itself nothing,' he had told his sister, Mrs. Aitken, when commencing it ; ' but to poor me, able only for nothing, it has a perceptible, though infinitely small, value ; and I mean to stick to it, if possible to the end.'

Later he wrote to his brother : ' As I grope about, read *Snorro* again, etc. etc., I find a great many meanings attach themselves to those old Tryggvesons, Hakons, Olafs, and their work in this world ; and *if* I knew Icelandic like you (and alas, if I had my own right hand, but not otherwise), I feel as if I could still write a rather bright and useful little book about them !'

' We are working dreadfully, poor Mary and I,' he told him later, ' at that monster of a Norse Preface, or Sketch of the Early Kings of Norway ; seldom did I undertake a more totally worthless thing, never anything at all which so bothered me in getting executed or came so near the impossible in this my fatal want of a right hand. . . . Mary talks of being actually done with the copying (as I will with the correcting) about the end of the week ; you *shall* then see it, if it could do the least good to you or anybody.'

The original Preface to the translation of the *Saga* thus grew into a self-contained work, in which he was keenly interested, for he had always found himself in close sympathy with the Norsemen, whom he regarded as the founders of most of what was admirable in the English character.

Dictation, however, rendered even this light labour wearisome. He could relate the stories of the kings with dramatic force and beauty, but he could not thereafter repeat them in cold blood, slowly, sentence by sentence, to be set down by someone else from word of mouth ; and the work, when finished, seemed ' diluted moonshine '.

On February 15, he noted in his Journal: 'Finished yesterday that long rigmarole upon the Norse Kings. Uncertain now what to do with it; if not at once throw it into the fire. It is worth nothing at all, has taught me at least how impossible the problem is of writing anything in the least *like myself* by dictation; how the presence of a third party between my thoughts and me is fatal to any process of clear thought.'

On January 2, he went walking with Allingham in Hyde Park, in afternoon sunshine as bright as spring. As they walked, he described 'a curious old Scotchwoman Susy, a blacksmith's daughter. She could do quadratic equations in her head, without any mathematics,' saying she 'thwarted' the problem. She 'wrote poetry, and used to say, "Burns and me are pure nature."' Sir Charles Johnson, a rich wild man, gave Susy a cottage and kail garden.'

*The Ring and the Book* came up for discussion once more, and Carlyle praised parts of it very highly, saying they 'showed a most intimate acquaintance with Italian life, better, I think, than anything else of Browning. But the whole is on a most absurd basis. The real story is plain enough on looking into it. The girl and the handsome priest were lovers.'

Allingham considered that Browning 'had neither given us the real story as he found it, nor, on the other hand, constructed a poem out of it, and in reading *The Ring and the Book* I felt (as I told Browning himself) like a creature with one leg and one wing, half hopping, half flying'—at which Carlyle laughed appreciatively. He surprised Allingham by going on to say he thought the *Irish Ballads* among Thackeray's best work, and 'quoted (as he often did) with great gusto and a strong brogue'—

'Twould binifit your sowls  
To see the butther'd rowls . . .

During another of their walks, on March 6, after Allingham had sat waiting in Carlyle's room while he finished punctuating the *Saga* translation, Allingham was considerably perturbed by the necessity of dodging the carriages in the streets, and recorded in his diary his fears that Carlyle might meet his death in this way, 'for he usually insists on crossing when he has made up his mind to it, carrying his stick so as to poke it into a horse's nose at need.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> William Allingham, *A Diary*, pp. 207-8.

## XXVIII

## LARKIN AND RUSKIN

(1872)

THE faithful Henry Larkin never altogether ceased to call, but sinks out of sight among the crowds now haunting the house, and the last glimpse of him is in March this year, when he found Carlyle reading the latest *Fors Clavigera*, XV, of Ruskin, whose especial appeal was to men of Larkin's sort. He listened with enthusiasm.

'I shall not easily forget,' he records, 'how earnestly and even affectionately he applauded Mr. Ruskin's fearless onslaughts upon all manner of delusions which were corrupting the very life-blood of our social existence; and how he hoped that his "Sun arrows" might pierce and stir into nobler life many hearts which he himself had been unable to reach.'

Larkin's warm appreciation must have been noticed, for Carlyle afterwards posted to him that number of *Fors Clavigera*, after having 'marked very carefully and emphatically the note explaining where they might be obtained.'<sup>1</sup>

Carlyle had been very well pleased with Ruskin's latest work, and had written him, on April 30 the previous year: 'This *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 5th, which I have just finished reading, is incomparable; a quasi-sacred consolation to me, which almost brings tears into my eyes! Every word of it is as if spoken, not out of my poor heart only, but out of the eternal skies; words winged with Empyrean wisdom, piercing as lightning,—and which I really do not remember to have heard the like of. *Continue*, while you have such utterances in you, to give them voice. They will find and force entrance into human hearts, *whatever* the "angle of incidence" may be; that is to say, whether, for the degraded and inhuman Blockheadism we, so-called "men", have mostly now become, you come in upon them at the broadside, at the top, or even at the bottom. Euge, Euge!'<sup>2</sup>

On 2.4.72, he was writing to Emerson, and mentioned how much he had come to hope from Ruskin: 'Do you read Ruskin's *Fors Clavigera*, which he cheerily tells me gets itself reprinted in America? If you don't, *do*, I advise you.

<sup>1</sup> *Carlyle and the Open Secret of his Life*, by Henry Larkin, p. 371.

<sup>2</sup> *Life and Work of John Ruskin*, by W. G. Collingwood, p. 126.

Also his *Munera Pulveris*, Oxford-Lectures on Art, and whatever else he is now writing,—if you can manage to get them (which is difficult here, owing to the ways he has towards the bibliopolic world!). There is nothing going on among us as notable to me as those fierce lighting-bolts Ruskin is copiously and desperately pouring into the black world of Anarchy all around him. No other man in England that I meet has in him the divine rage against iniquity, falsity, and baseness that Ruskin has, and that every man ought to have. Unhappily he is not a strong man; one might say a weak man rather; and has not the least of prudence in management; though if he can hold out for another fifteen years or so, he may produce, even in this way, a great effect.'

## XXIX

## DEATH OF MAZZINI

(1872)

ON March 3, Mazzini died at Pisa, and Moncure Conway called to inform Carlyle that he would 'hold a memorial service' in his honour. Carlyle talked freely and at length of the Italian patriot, and happily the preacher made an immediate note of what he said<sup>1</sup>:

'I remember well when he sat for the first time on that seat there. A more beautiful person I never beheld, with his soft flashing eyes and face full of intelligence. He had great talent—certainly the only acquaintance of mine of anything like equal intellect who ever became entangled in what seemed to me hopeless visions. He was rather silent, spoke chiefly in French, though he spoke good English even then. It was plain he might have taken a high rank in literature. He wrote well, as it was—sometimes for the love of it, at others when he wanted a little money, but never what he might have written had he devoted himself to that kind of work. He had fine tastes, particularly in music. But he gave himself up as a martyr to his aims for Italy.

'He lived almost in squalor. His health was poor from the first; he took no care of it. He used to smoke a great

<sup>1</sup> *Autobiography*, by Moncure D. Conway, II, pp. 59–60.

deal, and drink coffee with bread crumbled in it ; but hardly gave any attention to his food. His mother used to send him money ; but he gave it away. When she died she left him as much as two hundred pounds a year—all she had—but it went to Italian beggars. His mother was the only member of his family who clung to him. His father soon turned his back on him ; his only sister married a strict Catholic, and herself became too strict to have anything to do with Mazzini. He did see her once or twice, but the interviews were too painful to be repeated. He desired, I am told, to see her again when he was dying, but she declined. Poor Mazzini !

‘ I could not have sympathy with his views and hopes. He used to come here and talk about the “ solidarity of peoples ” ; and when he found that I was less and less interested in such things, he had yet another attraction than myself which brought him to us. But he found that she also by no means entered into his opinions, and his visits became fewer. But we always esteemed him. He was a very religious soul. When I first knew him he revered Dante chiefly, if not exclusively.

‘ When his letters were opened at the post-office here, Mazzini became, for the first time, known to the English people. There was great indignation at an English government taking the side of the Austrian against Italian patriots ; and Mazzini was much sought for, invited to dinners, and all that. But he did not want the dinners. He went to but few places. He formed an intimacy with the Ashursts, which did him great good—gave him a kind of home circle for the rest of his life in England. At last it has come to an end. I went to see him just before he left London for the last time, passed an hour, and came away feeling that I should never see him again. And so it is. The papers and people have gone away blubbering over him—the very papers and people that denounced him during life, seeing nothing of the excellence that was in him. They now praise him without any perception of his defects. Poor Mazzini ! After all, he succeeded. He died receiving the homage of the people, and seeing Italy united, with Rome for its capital. Well, one may be glad he has succeeded. We wait to see whether Italy will make anything great out of what she has got. We wait ! ’

Two days later, Allingham came about three o'clock, and heard Carlyle say :

'Poor Mazzini! Lying dead there—all done, all over. What a bright young man when he came here in 1836 and sat on that sofa! He got into "solidarity" and all manner of absurdities. He used to trouble himself about every wretched Italian who was in any way political. There was one Italian who fell in love with a danseuse and stabbed himself; Mazzini took care of him, recovered him, and persuaded the girl to marry him.'<sup>2</sup>

A few weeks later F. D. Maurice the preacher also died, though still, compared with Carlyle, quite young—not yet sixty-seven.

## XXX

## WALKS ABOUT CHELSEA

(1872)

THE afternoon walks with Allingham went on, and one day the Agricultural Labourers' strike provided the topic of conversation. 'All Society' was against the Strikers, so Allingham was somewhat surprised when Carlyle expressed sympathy with them. Pressed on the subject, he increased Allingham's astonishment by denouncing any form of slavery. 'Work by compulsion,' he pointed out, 'is little good. You must carry man's volition along with you if you are to command to any purpose.'

One day Carlyle was watched with modest reverence by a youthful Scots miners' agent, Henry Rankine, then just twenty-one: 'Carlyle was unmistakable,' he says, 'known from published portraits: walking slowly along the Chelsea Embankment towards the town, eyes downcast upon the ground before his feet—a meditative walk. His hat was a broadbrim, and he had a common brown shepherd's shawl round his shoulders. At the end of the Embankment, he disappeared into a tobacconist's shop and I saw him no more.'<sup>1</sup>

About the same time the portrait painter, George Richmond, happened to be at the Albert Gate at midnight, when he was accosted by a man who asked a light for his cigar. They were separating when suddenly they recog-

<sup>2</sup> *William Allingham, A Diary*, p. 208.

<sup>1</sup> Told to D. A. W. by Henry Rankine.



nised each other. Carlyle laughed aloud and exclaimed: 'I thought it was just any son of Adam, and I find a friend!' It was soon after the Pope's return to Rome, Richmond explained afterwards,<sup>2</sup> and so the talk turned on this. 'The poor old Pope!' cried Carlyle. 'The poo-oor old Pope!' Then, as if trying to find something kind to say of him, he added: 'He has a big mouth! I do not like your button-holes of mouths, like the Greek statues you are all so fond of.'

He had often declared his admiration for good portraiture, and Allingham records a talk on this subject that took place in May, when Froude and he were visiting Carlyle.<sup>3</sup> Carlyle was emphatic: all painting was 'worthless, except portrait-painting.'

'The connoisseurs tell us a portrait is no work of art,' Froude chimed in.

'Oh, no!' Allingham cried.

'Well,' Froude went on, 'when I said to Ruskin that I cared for no pictures but portraits, he replied, "That proves you care nothing at all about art."'

'But that was not saying that a good portrait is not a work of art,' Allingham pointed out, shrewdly, and since Carlyle was no longer interested they allowed the discussion to drop.

### XXXI

#### PROFESSOR BLACKIE IS EDIFIED

(1872)

THE most conspicuous figure of the time in Scottish academic circles, Professor John Stuart Blackie of Edinburgh, who taught Greek and did his utmost to keep alive the dying Gaelic, while denouncing the study of dead languages in general, and Classics in particular, and raised the slogan of 'Home Rule for Scotland', was in London in May, running to spiritualistic séances, lunching with Cardinal Newman, and breakfasting with Gladstone. He was a pleasant and arresting sight in cloistered academic circles, wearing his plaid in an old-fashioned way and pass-

<sup>2</sup> *The Story of My Life*, by Augustus J. C. Hare, IV, pp. 80-1.

<sup>3</sup> *William Allingham, A Diary*, p. 209.

ing for a man of bold originality, who seldom failed to astonish the old women of both sexes as often as he tried.

While in London, he enjoyed two agreeable hours in the company of the 'grey old prophet' Carlyle, and his brother, Dr. John. As usual, Carlyle 'laid about him all round', but they managed to get on well enough, he wrote later, although he found the 'prophet' very far from being in sympathy with his interest in séances. 'No, a thousand times, no!' Carlyle retorted to an invitation to attend some demonstration. 'Spiritualism=Ultra-Brutalism and Liturgy of Apes by the Dead Sea! Let not such things be once named among you!'<sup>1</sup> This uncompromising attitude may explain what puzzled his niece at the time, that when Ruskin called one day and Carlyle was not at home, he entertained her with long accounts of all he had seen and heard at séances, but urgently required her to 'promise not to tell papa!'<sup>2</sup>

Francis Espinasse reports a conversation that turned on Goethe, in whom Blackie, who was otherwise a profound admirer of the great German poet, discovered a certain lack of sympathy towards earnest men like Luther. Carlyle replied that it could not well have been otherwise, since Luther was a 'savage', and Goethe anything but that. They adjourned presently to the little flagged space in the back garden, where Carlyle was in the habit of retiring for a quiet smoke. Blackie went on to say something eulogistic of John Wesley, whereupon Carlyle burst forth with: 'Damn Wesley for bringing in a Jew-nosed God!'<sup>2</sup>

Espinasse was too well accustomed to Carlyle's emphatic speech to be even mildly surprised at so unusual a declaration, but Blackie was astonished, perhaps a trifle shocked, and Carlyle, seeing this, graciously added, 'Well, I withdraw the damn!'

Later, he remarked to Espinasse with pleasure that there was 'something of the old scholar' about the eccentric professor.

<sup>1</sup> *John Stuart Blackie*, by A. M. Stoddart, II, p. 75.

<sup>2</sup> *Literary Recollection*, by F. Espinasse, pp. 199 and 200, supplemented by a letter to D. A. W.

## XXXII

## AMERICAN VISITORS

(1872)

AFTER lunch one day in May, Froude brought an American, Higginson, to call, and they found Carlyle in his study, reading Weiss's *Life of Theodore Parker*, the Boston divine.<sup>1</sup> He spoke of Parker, and other Americans, but found fault with the book for its want of arrangement — 'impossible to find anything in it, even by aid of the index'; but what astonished the visitor most was that 'he did not say a single really offensive or ungracious thing.' As so many others had observed already, what saved his harshest words from being offensive was that 'after the most vehement tirade he would suddenly pause, throw his head back, and give as genuine and kindly a laugh as ever I heard, a broad, honest, human laugh, which instantly changed the worn face into something frank and even winning, giving it an expression that would have won the confidence of any child. It seemed something habitual. The laugh revealed the genial humorist, wearing a mask of grimness. The effect upon one of his visitors was wholly disarming.'

Higginson was a Unitarian divine who had been eloquent against slavery as long ago as 1854,<sup>2</sup> and owing to Carlyle's 'utterances on American affairs' he had declined a letter of introduction offered him in America. However, Froude, to his credit, had now persuaded him to call and see for himself, and Carlyle's laugh blew all his prejudices away. They sat talking 'as fearlessly' as if Carlyle were an old friend, and when the Civil War came to be discussed, Carlyle 'put questions showing that he had considered the matter in a sane and reasonable way. He was especially interested in the freed slaves and the coloured troops; he said but little, yet that was always to the point, and without one ungenerous word. On the contrary, he showed more readiness to comprehend the situation after the war than was to be found in most Englishmen. The need of giving the ballot to the former slaves he readily admitted, when it

<sup>1</sup> *Carlyle's Laugh*, by T. W. Higginson, *Atlantic Monthly*, Oct. 1881. See also *Carlyle on Cromwell and Others*, Book XIII, Chapter XII, p. 241.

<sup>2</sup> *Autobiography* of Moncure D. Conway, I, p. 162.

was explained to him ; and he at once volunteered the remark that in a republic they needed this as the guarantee of their freedom. "You could do no less," he said, "for the men who had stood by you."

They set out for Kensington Gardens, Froude 'irreproachably dressed, Carlyle with unkempt, grizzly whiskers, a high collar, an ancient felt hat ; wearing an old faded frock coat, checked waistcoat, coarse gray trousers, and russet shoes ; holding a stout stick, with his hands in very large gray woollen gloves,—this was Carlyle. I noticed that when we first left his house, his aspect attracted no notice in the streets, being doubtless familiar in his own neighbourhood ; but as we went farther and farther on, many eyes were turned upon him, and men sometimes stopped to gaze at him. We passed where some grounds were being appropriated for a public park. Part of the turf had been torn up, but there was a little emerald strip where ragged children were turning somersaults. As we approached they paused and looked shyly at us, as if uncertain of their right, and I could see the oldest, not over ten, a sharp-eyed little London boy, reviewing us with one keen glance, as if selecting him in whom confidence might best be placed. Now I am myself a child-loving person,'—as also was Froude,—'yet the little gamin dismissed us with a glance and fastened on Carlyle. Pausing on one foot, as if ready to take to his heels, he called out, "I say, mister, may we roll on this here grass?" The philosopher faced round, leaning on his staff, and replied, "Yes, my little fellow, roll at discretion." Instantly the children resumed their antics, while one little girl repeated meditatively, "He says we may roll at discretion."'

Mr. Higginson was soon absorbed in his first sight of what was then the finest show in London, the endless procession of riders and equipages in Rotten Row. Carlyle and Froude received numerous greetings, and he 'walked in safe obscurity' by their side.

Another American, General James Grant Wilson, was introduced to Carlyle this summer by Miss Thackeray, although no introduction was needed. He had been born in New York ; but his father was William Wilson of Edinburgh, poet and publisher, a friend of Carlyle's fifty years ago, before he emigrated to America.

Carlyle received him cordially, rising from the writing-

desk in the centre of his study to shake hands. He had been reading a volume of Motley's *Dutch Republic*, which he had read several times with entire satisfaction, and which he called a 'grand history, a well-written and altogether valuable work.'

Wilson was engaged in some literary work at the time, and Carlyle, perhaps apprehensive that he had been charged by some New York firm to make proposals to him, hastened to say that he had altogether abandoned authorship, and that editors endeavoured in vain to tempt him with the offer of large fees. 'Neither for fame, love, nor money would he put pen to paper.' He explained that his correspondence was carried on chiefly with the help of a blue pencil, which he now used to write his own name and Wilson's in a copy of his latest work, *The Early Kings of Norway*. Nearly half a century before, he had presented the General's father with a copy of his first original work.

In the garden, while 'blowing a cloud', as he called it, he showed his visitor some primroses and heather brought from Scotland and planted by Mrs. Carlyle, and ivy 'which he had reverently brought from the birthplace of Burns and planted in the Chelsea garden. The Scottish grows successfully in American soil'; and later on there grew in a New York garden a thriving ivy plant from a slip given him by Carlyle, presumably on this occasion.

The artist, Daniel Maclise, a Chelsea neighbour, Wilson mentions as having been among Carlyle's intimates, and he observed in the study busts of William of Orange and John Knox, Oliver Cromwell, Gustavus Adolphus, Robert Burns, Sir Walter Scott, and the Duke of Wellington.<sup>3</sup>

## XXXIII

## IN PRAISE OF TOBACCO

(1872)

WILLIAM MACCALL, who had first come to see Carlyle twenty-four years before, records a conversation about tobacco, which followed Carlyle's enquiry as to the literary work in which he was engaged. Maccall

<sup>3</sup> *Personal Recollections of European Celebrities*, 6th Paper in the series, first printed in *The Criterion*, by General James Grant Wilson, D.C.L., Editor of Appleton's *Cyclopedia of American Biography*, &c. &c.

told him he was now writing for the *Tobacco Plant* on appropriate topics, and added, alluding to his own lack of prosperity: 'My life has begun in smoke, and seems destined to end in smoke.'

Thereupon Carlyle, who had been a smoker from the age of eleven, began to praise tobacco, 'one of the divinest benefits that had ever come to the human race, arriving as compensation and consolation at a time when social, political, religious anarchy and every imaginable plague made the earth unspeakably miserable.' He declared that he could never think of 'this miraculous blessing from the Gods without being overwhelmed by a tenderness for which he could find no adequate expression.'<sup>1</sup>

Which is in amusing contrast with the greatest of French historians, Michelet,<sup>2</sup> who cursed the smoking-rooms and classed tobacco with opium, alcohol, and coffee—'four instruments of the Devil'—apparently because they enabled men to dispense with female society.

Carlyle's tobacconist and newsagent was Nicholas, of Cheyne Walk, successor to his father who had been a wig-maker and used weekly to dress the artist Turner's wig. Young Nicholas remembered Carlyle from an early age, as he had often heard him having long conversations with his father.

Carlyle called every morning, taking the *Daily News*. He smoked a mixture called Brankston's—the makers were a very old firm—but sometimes, as there was not much sale for it, and the tobacconist could not always keep a stock in condition, he would order it direct from the firm. He and Tennyson often accused each other of smoking too much, and the poet always dried his tobacco, which he declared made it more innocuous, while Carlyle held the reverse view.

Nicholas remembered the time when the trees in Cheyne Row were planted, at the instigation of Carlyle, who got up a petition among the neighbours. Quite a number of people, mostly Scots, used to come down to Chelsea and enquired when Carlyle left the house, hoping for a glimpse of him.

'Carlyle,' he declared,<sup>3</sup> 'was very fond of children. There are a good many young people in the parish who are very proud of the fact that he used to take them on his knee, and he always had a pat on the head for them when he passed.'

<sup>1</sup> *Thomas Carlyle, Cope's Smokerroom Booklet, No. 5, pp. 13-14.*

<sup>2</sup> *History of France, Vol. XV, Chapter IX.*

<sup>3</sup> See *Pall Mall Gazette*, 10.8.1889, *Some Chelsea Celebrities.*

Arthur J. Hughes has described<sup>4</sup> how when living with his father, a tax-collector at Chelsea, in Glebe Place, which is a continuation of Cheyne Row, he and other children used to look out for people coming, and run and open the door for those who would give them presents. Carlyle always gave them a penny when he was going out. Hughes attended a Dame's school directly opposite Number Five, run by a Mrs. Smith, whose husband, an Oxford man, was bedridden, and intimate with Carlyle, who came to see him. 'Carlyle used to speak at times to us children on the street,' Hughes went on, 'and give us coppers and sweets; brandy balls, I remember, were what we preferred. He would ask, "What is your name?" and "What have you been learning?" and, "Do you like sweets?"' The boy Hughes was specially attentive to Carlyle, because his father had told him that he would afterwards be proud to remember anything about him.

Carlyle, the tobacconist Nicholas reported, went out in the morning about nine or ten o'clock, with his niece, and often towards midnight alone, when it was fine. The old bridge was his favourite haunt, where he would remain for an hour on end, leaning on the rail in a recess. 'Anyone who knew the stillness and beauty of the scene, unsurpassed, perhaps, in the world, can understand its attraction for Carlyle: the quaint old bridge, the river craft, the ebb and flow of the river; the dark blue sky above, starlit; a world asleep on either bank; silence around and peace.'

### XXXIV

#### THE EMPRESS AUGUSTA COMES TO TOWN

(1872)

THE Empress Augusta lives in English memory by the journalist's witty summary of her husband's dispatch to her during the war with Napoleon the Little:

Glory to God, my dear Augusta,  
We've had another awful buster:  
Ten thousand Frenchmen sent below,—  
Praise God, from whom all blessings flow!

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<sup>4</sup> To D. A. W., in Judge's Chambers in Rangoon, where Hughes had come on business from Shanghai.

When she was in London this year, she was anxious to make Carlyle's acquaintance, as she had long felt for him a 'special reverence'. Accordingly, twelve or fourteen of the leaders of English art and science were received at the German Embassy for her benefit, and she 'conversed in the most amiable manner with each of them, especially with Carlyle,' notwithstanding that her courtiers were considerably astonished by the highly unconventional character of his dress on this august occasion. The stem of his pipe was seen protruding from his pocket!

In spite of that, the good Augusta said afterwards, according to a letter from the Cabinet of the Empress in Coblenz, that she 'discerned from her conversation with him, not only how he judged of the historical events in Germany with rare sympathy and felt a real affection for this country, but also how he did justice to the Royal House of Prussia, and recognized its present task with a warmth of feeling astonishing in a foreigner. For this reason her majesty,' speaking fourteen years afterwards, 'has always regarded him as specially fitted, by his profound knowledge of both countries and his impartiality, to represent favourably the community of interests between his Fatherland and Germany by the authority of his name, and to promote their mutual understanding.'<sup>1</sup>

## XXXV

## A SUPPLEMENT TO SCHILLER

(1872)

WRITING to Lady Ashburton on September 9, Carlyle, after telling her that he was much as usual, '*silent mostly as a stone*', went on to say: 'Twistleton (who called the other day, and talked, and poked my poor ribs through the Park) sent me next day an excellent little German book about Schiller's Father and Mother (my *best* reading, except the *finis* of Shakespeare, since I saw you),—and along with it a Note,—which, were it only for the

<sup>1</sup> From an article in the *St. James's Gazette*, 24.1.1890, quoting the German translator of Froude's *Life of Carlyle*, and the Berlin Correspondent of the *Standard*, who gave the letter from Coblenz, and the statement of the battle painter, Georg Bleibtrau.



Copperplate hand, deserves to be sent to your Ladyship specially.'

The book Twistleton brought supplied the materials for the supplement to the *Life of Friedrich Schiller*, which Carlyle was now preparing for 'The People's Edition' of his collected works, shortly to appear. The Preface to the volume is dated November, 1872. Shortly after Twistleton's call, he was out walking with Allingham, and mentioned that he was on the point of starting the final re-reading, rather than revision, of *Schiller*, and to fill up space had decided to translate the new book. It occupied him until the beginning of February. The mere translating, he wrote, he could have finished, but for the handicap of his useless right hand, in five or six days; but it took him, working with Mary, seven or eight weeks.

As soon as he heard it mentioned, Allingham remembered his magazine, and begged: 'Perhaps you will let it first appear in *Fraser*?'

'That cannot be, sir,' Carlyle retorted; but the sight of Allingham's disappointment no doubt impelled him to change his mind, and in due course *Fraser* had the honour of first publication.

It is noteworthy that he left unaltered in the Appendix his life of Daniel Schubart, whose fate, as well it might, had frightened Schiller. There is something Rhadamanthine in the balanced justice of his exposure of the hereditary Duke of Württemberg, one of the royal caste who seemed to him unfit to control the destiny of any living creature. 'The only subject of regret is, that any duty to the world, beyond the duty of existing inoffensively, should be committed to such hands.' Exalted as the son of his father to a position of autocracy, the Duke was irritated by Schubart, an editor at Ulm, and to oblige the Jesuits as well as please himself and others kidnapped him, and kept him 'unacquitted, unjudged, unaccused', in prison for about ten years, hard solitary confinement part of it, till his brain became unhinged and his body broken, and even Württembergers could see the stupidity of submitting to such hereditary tyranny. Schiller himself, the best of them, departed from home in haste when royalty began to notice him.

## XXXVI

## AFTERNOON WALKS

(1872)

HOME from a holiday, Allingham came to Cheyne Row at three o'clock on Sunday, September 22, and found Carlyle friendly, and more willing than usual to be interrupted. The day was sunny but cold, and they went walking in Kensington Gardens. First Allingham's curiosity had to be satisfied about St. Elizabeth and Marbach, or Marburg,<sup>1</sup> as ours may be by reading *Frederick*.<sup>2</sup> Carlyle concluded by quoting appropriately a favourite stanza from Shakespeare :

Fear no more the heat o' the sun,  
Nor the furious winter's rages ;  
Thou thy worldly task hast done,  
Home art gone and ta'en thy wages.  
Golden lads and girls all must,  
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.<sup>3</sup>

'One of the prettiest things ever written—that,' he commented. 'It is like the distant tinkle of evening bells. Much comes of the rhymes—rhymes are valuable sometimes, answering somehow to the melody within a man's thought and soul.'

Delighted by this concession, Allingham agreed : 'A man may have skill in metre and little along with it,' and quoted *The Harp That Once Through Tara's Halls*, by Moore.

'Could not be better done,' Carlyle said, adding dubiously, 'by a man who could do it at all—do anything worth having.' While he was thinking of this, Allingham was equally perplexed by something that remained to him inexplicable—Carlyle's failure to master the technique of Poetry, so that in his verse, for a few lines 'the movement may go right, but only by chance ; presently it goes all awry.'

He kept his thoughts to himself ; but David Masson once said the same thing to Carlyle, and was surprised by

<sup>1</sup> *William Allingham, A Diary*, p. 210. Marbach was Schiller's birth-place, perhaps a slip of the pen for Marburg, which grew from a village to a town mainly by dint of St. Elizabeth's miracles.

<sup>2</sup> Book II, Chapter VI. In Vol. I of most editions.

<sup>3</sup> *Cymbeline*, Act IV, Sc. II. Critics gifted with second sight deny Shakespeare's authorship, which in no way affects the beauty of the lines.

a candid admission of this defective sense of rhythm. 'If I had been taught music early, and learned to sing when young,' Carlyle declared, 'it might have been different.'

On this occasion Allingham and he returned to what had suggested the Shakespearean quotation, and 'he spoke of having once fainted—"torrents of sleep descended on the brain; death, I have thought, will be like that."'

Another day, Allingham heard him say, 'I hear that Burns's nieces, the Miss Beggs, are paupers. If every Burns Club throughout the world would give them *one night's punch!*'

He listened patiently while Allingham told an ugly story about the old Duke of Wellington, who was once prevented by a farmer at Walmer from riding along a bridle-path. Instead of magnanimously enduring him, as Frederick endured the Potsdam miller, who refused to sell to the owner of Sans-Souci,<sup>4</sup> the Duke set his soldiers to punish the farmer by pulling up his turnips!

When Allingham finished, Carlyle was silent for a while, then began talking of Cervantes, his poverty, his nobility and sweetness. *Don Quixote* he considered 'a very pretty book', and added: 'Cervantes began the *Don*, I think, in a mere spirit of raillery, but gradually saw his way to making a fine character of him.'

### XXXVII

#### SUICIDE AND OTHER MATTERS

(1872)

THE working-hours were filled by the new edition of *Schiller* in October, and one night, we are told, Carlyle was brought to the edge of weeping, or even over the edge, by Voss's account of Schiller's death. The day before he died, Voss saw him 'look at his last little baby with inexpressible love and woe (*Wehmuth*), and then bury his head among the pillows in a flood of tears.'

At other hours Carlyle was reading at large. On October 3, Allingham found him at Walt Whitman's *Democratic Vistas*, lent by Forster. He had previously said of Whitman, 'It is as though the town-bull had learned to hold a pen.' But on this occasion he praised him somewhat.

<sup>4</sup> *Frederick the Great*, Book XXI, Chapter VII.

'Professor Clifford thinks,' Allingham told him, 'that three angles of a triangle may perhaps *not* be always equal to two right angles.'

'Let him prove that,' retorted Carlyle, still a mathematician in old age, 'and I'll give him my head for an ounce of tobacco. God bless us all, what deluges of delirium are pouring out over the world!'

On October 5, occurred a talk which dates one of Froude's unfortunate misconceptions, that Carlyle had contemplated suicide because the shaking of his right hand had stopped his work. He describes him as applying to himself the wonderful speech of Macbeth when he heard that his wife was dead:

To-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow  
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,  
To the last syllable of recorded time;  
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!  
Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player,  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,  
And then is heard no more: it is a tale  
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
Signifying nothing.

Froude's melodramatic application fades into the light of common day. Carlyle had just completed a re-perusal, for pleasure, of the whole of Shakespeare, 'unique of speaking mankind', and thus described to Forster the contrast between reading the poet and reading the commentator: 'Dyce's text, etc., seem to me to be fairly the best: at the same time for use it is simply intolerable. A wandering through the gardens as of Paradise,—accompanied everywhere as with a whirlpool of barking curs, unfortunate cats, apes, and irrational unclean creatures!' He was led to speak of self-destruction through the unhappy end of a friend who had been overwhelmed with grief at the loss of his wife and had sought this way out. Remembering his own black sorrow and despair, Carlyle could understand, and understanding, sympathise, and in a measure approve. For himself, it was quite otherwise. 'God's will be done' was the firmest tenet of his faith, and even in the utmost depth of grief he could still find the patience and the courage to await, with a calmness that developed and strengthened with the years, the inevitable end.

To Allingham he spoke of 'Suicide of Justice', and treated

of the killing of oneself in a matter-of-fact, sympathetic tone: 'The Roman death,—*Venio, Proserpina!* etc.' (The reference is to the Roman anecdote of an old man who stumbled, and taking this as a hint to die, kissed the ground, and exclaimed, 'I come, Proserpine!' calling out to the pleasant Goddess of the Underworld; and then went home and wound up his affairs and made an end.) His opinions on suicide were similar to those expressed in David Hume's essay.<sup>1</sup> The absurdity of imputing any intention to commit suicide, because of this kindly reference to a current event, is palpable.

On another day, Allingham was shocked by what seemed to him gross utilitarianism. Carlyle had become a regular reader of the periodicals, and praised an article in the *Fortnightly* on the Morality of Marriage, which advocated the restriction of families on economic grounds. Allingham protested warmly, much perplexed: 'The question is not to be settled by rules of frugality,' and so on, but Carlyle would not listen. Now, after sixty years, what Carlyle then approved is slowly gaining the approval even of the blindest upholders of ancient prejudices.

Plato's *Dialogues* of Socrates provided a fruitful subject for discussion soon after. 'Plato has not been of much use to me,' Carlyle confessed; 'a high, refined man: "*Odi profanum vulgus.*" Socrates—I did not get much benefit from *him*.'

'His Discourse before his Death?'

'Well, in such a case, I should have made no discourse; should have wished to be left alone, to profound reflections.'

Froude came in during another discussion of Plato as Carlyle was saying: 'Plato's style is admirable, but he has nothing particular to tell you.' (Which may have suggested Tennyson's famous description of himself: 'I have the best command of English since Shakespeare, only I have nothing to say!')

'One wonders how much is Socrates,' Allingham said.

'Socrates one suspects to be a myth mainly,' Carlyle replied.<sup>1</sup> 'I could get nothing out of Plato. What do you mean then? The devil a word!'

'You would have liked to meet him?' Froude asked, referring to Socrates.

<sup>1</sup> 1854 edition of *Philosophical Works* of David Hume, IV, pp. 538-46.

<sup>2</sup> Meaning Plato's Socrates. Diogenes Laertius says the same in his *Life of Plato*, quoting Aristotle and Socrates himself to that effect.

'Oh yes, I dare say I should have found him highly interesting in himself.'

Speaking of *Candide*, Allingham declared once: 'Voltaire is always crapulous, often nasty, when speaking of the relation of the sexes. Very different from Fielding, who, though he takes liberties, warmly recognises true love.'

'And I believe Fielding was much attached to his own wife,' Carlyle replied.

'I don't remember anything like love in Voltaire's writings.'

'Voltaire is a very questionable article.'

'But he hated injustice.'

'Oh, he abhorred that with his whole soul!' Carlyle agreed.

They went on to discuss *Macbeth*, which Allingham had seen the other night with Phelps. 'The crowd of witches put on the stage is a great mistake,' he thought. 'The Incantation—a poet nowadays would hardly describe the brewage in detail, "Eye of newt and toe of frog", etc. It would be thought vulgar and ludicrous. Goethe avoided the like in *Faust*.'

'Yes,' said Carlyle; 'but all that in the cauldron scene is very clever too. It struck me often in reading Shakespeare—this man knew a hundred times more about animals, plants, and all the visible world than I do: how did he learn it all? What he needs for his purpose is ready to hand.'

Thereafter they walked into Hyde Park by the Powder Magazine. Heavy rain made them seek shelter under a plane tree, and Carlyle talked all the while, vehemently, on Emigration, urging Allingham to write upon it. Allingham refused to entertain the idea, for which he found himself unfitted, but naïvely offered to take down anything Carlyle cared to dictate. The Sage was not to be caught so easily, however. He laughed, and said that Sir Baldwyn Leighton had offered to send him a shorthand writer who could write as fast as one spoke.

## XXXVIII

## LITERATURE AS A CAREER

(1872)

“SEEKEST thou great things, seek them not,” Carlyle quoted in a letter to an unknown correspondent some years before. ‘I could do no good with your “Tragedy” after never so much endeavour, it depends on Playhouse Managers, etc. etc. ;—and is I must say likely to have been an unreasonable, though innocent, attempt, on the part of a young man, inexperienced in life, much more in the suitable ways of Delineating and Expounding what life is and should be.

‘Forgive my plainness of speech. But it is my standing advice to all young persons who trace in themselves a superior capacity of mind: to seek, beyond all other conditions, a silent course of activity,—and to disbelieve totally the babble of reviews and newspapers and loud clamour of nonsense everywhere prevalent, that “Literature” (even if one were qualified) is the truly noble human career. Far other, very far! since you ask my opinion. The greatest minds I have known, or have authentically heard of, have not been the speaking ones at all,—much less in these loud times; raging with palaver, and with little else, from sea to sea!’

This was typical of many hundreds of letters whereof several dozen have been printed, every one addressed to the individual case of the applicant. In old age when he could not write but only dictate, he had to be briefer, but the meaning was always the same, as, for example, in a reply of November 5 this year from his niece to one who begged to be advised to make literature his trade:

‘Mr. Carlyle bids me say that he has never in his life heard a madder proposal than the one you have just made to him. He would advise you by no means to quit your present employment. He thinks it would only be a degree less foolish than to throw yourself from the top of the Monument in the hope of flying.’

## XXXIX

## EMERSON DROPS IN

(1872)

EMERSON'S house in Concord had been burned in July this year; and his admirers, resolving to rebuild it for him, contrived to get him out of the way by persuading and enabling him to go on a tour to Egypt. So in his seventieth year he was wandering again, a venerable Innocent Abroad; and on Thursday, November 7, he called at Cheyne Row as suddenly as he had called at Craigenputtock nearly forty years before; and was ushered into the room where Carlyle sat reading.

'He opened his arms and embraced me,' he wrote to his wife next day, 'after seriously gazing for a time (and saying): "I am glad to see you once more in the flesh,"—and we sat down and had a steady outpouring for two hours and more, on persons, events, and opinions . . . As I was curious to know his estimate of my men and authors, of course I got them all again in Scottish speech and wit, with large deduction of size. He is strong in person and manners as ever,—though so aged-looking,—and his memory as good.'<sup>1</sup>

On November 9, he told Allingham: 'Carlyle called to-day. His humour runs into everything, hearty laugh, excellent company—he has always something to say in choice language.'

'It's a happiness to see Emerson once more,' Carlyle told Ruskin's friend, the American Professor Charles Eliot Norton,<sup>2</sup> with whom Carlyle had formed a close friendship this winter; 'but,' he added, 'there's a great contrast between him and me.'

'He seems very content with life, and takes such satisfaction in the world, especially in your country. One would suppose to hear him that you had no troubles there, and no share in the darkness that hangs over these old lands. It's a very striking and curious spectacle to behold a man in these days so confidently cheerful as Emerson.'

'I'm not such a very bloody-minded old villain after all,' he went on, with a hearty laugh, 'not quite so horrid an ogre as some good people imagine. But the world is

<sup>1</sup> *Ralph Waldo Emerson*, by J. E. Cabot, II, p. 276.

<sup>2</sup> *New Princeton Review*, July, 1886, p. 8.



very black to me, and I see nothing to be content with in this brand new, patent society of ours.’<sup>3</sup>

It was on this trip that Emerson heard Ruskin deliver a ‘model’ lecture, but in private Ruskin’s gloomy view of civilisation was declared by him to be worse than Carlyle’s : ‘for Carlyle always ended with a laugh which cleared the air again, but with Ruskin it was steady gloom.’<sup>4</sup>

James Hutchison Stirling was present at a lecture Emerson delivered in London, when Carlyle was on the platform. ‘What contrast it was to look upon them!’ he wrote.<sup>5</sup> ‘Emerson the calm, the chastened, the unmoved—motionless, emotionless—a being on whom the outward world could not make a mark, but still the slouching, as it were, and retiring scholar. . . . Carlyle like a wild St. John of the wilderness, with fire and smoke and genius rolling through him ever ; his thick dark hair (it may be, in contempt of Gall) confused upon his forehead, shutting it from view, and the Rousseau of his nature glancing from his eye the question (I thought), “Do you recognise me here?”’

Writing to the Doctor, to tell him of Emerson’s movements, Carlyle said of him what perhaps best nails the difference between them : ‘He is an excellent, pure and placid soul ; the only fault I have to him, that which the Prophet Isaiah expresses in these words : “Woe to them that are at ease in Zion!”’

So long as there were ills remaining to be set right, and injustices and follies to be denounced, Carlyle could not be at ease, could not stem the current of his passionate desire for reformation ; and so he must continue to the end, tranquillised in a measure and only in personal directions, but still feeling acutely the burden of human misery.

Even if Emerson had been miraculously endowed with a vision of the next half century, and seen what we have seen, the worst of Carlyle’s forebodings fulfilled (if in a manner he did not anticipate), the smiling philosopher would have continued to smile. He had not only a conscience that was clear ; he had a digestion that was the wonder of America, a nation enslaved by indigestion. He deserved it too. He had ‘hitched his waggon to a star’ and avoided hurry and worry, the prime causes of most bodily ills ; and

<sup>3</sup> *Letters of Charles Eliot Norton*, I, pp. 484-5.

<sup>4</sup> *Ralph Waldo Emerson*, by J. E. Cabot, II, pp. 281-2.

<sup>5</sup> *James Hutchison Stirling*, by Amelia Hutchison Stirling, pp. 262-3.

seldom indeed had he a sorrow that could hinder him from enjoying pie at breakfast in comfort that was complete.<sup>6</sup>

## XL

## SOME OPINIONS OF CHELSEA

(1872)

IN January, Frederic Harrison had written to John Morley<sup>1</sup>: 'I was struck with humiliation when I went to see the old Prophet at Chelsea. He seems to live in a very dismal corner of this foul city. When I thought of the poor, soured, wild old genius, coiling himself up in his own virtue in that alley where one might expect to find one's washerwoman, I could not help contrasting it with the luxurious homes and lovely scenery wherein sundry articles against luxury are produced and the royal palace of the "Bard" at Blackdown—who is after all but an organ-grinder to the true Bard at Chelsea.'

Dean Stanley's wife had said one day, looking at Carlyle's house and thinking aloud: 'It is strange Carlyle lives in a cheap little house when he can afford a better,'—an opinion that had long prevailed in fashionable circles. It was a scandal for a man of Carlyle's eminence to dwell in a neighbourhood then so much beyond the pale. The absence of any disguise about the reason, that he got a good house cheaply, was hardly decent. The Leigh Hunts were only one of many families who had felt the force of such objections and had moved away as soon as possible. But Carlyle's continuance there was of a piece with his plain clothes; the common people could feel to the end that he was one of themselves, with no wish to look down upon them or to rise upon their shoulders.

'I am with you in every word,' Morley replied to Frederic Harrison; 'and you put it in a way that has sent me staring blankly and gloomily over my landscape all day. You were never more right than in your word of honour for that rugged old hero at Chelsea—the frugality and simpleness of whose life, added to an unvaried industry for tens of years in preaching his word, is a real honour to human nature.'

<sup>6</sup> *Emerson*, by Dr. O. W. Holmes, pp. 269-70, and other biographies.

<sup>1</sup> *Early Life and Letters of John Morley*, by F. W. Hirst, I, pp. 209-10 and 226-7.

## XLI

## ON NATURAL SCENERY

(1872)

PASSING through the tail of a Fenian meeting in Hyde Park—'mainly London idlers'—with FitzJames Stephen one November day led Carlyle to exclaim to Allingham: 'What are we coming to? People intend to try Atheism awhile. They will not find it answer.'

'When the main road of dogma has become quagmire,' Allingham said, 'people will get back to Religion by byways, as it were. Domestic love will not fail. The love of Nature, too, I own I think a powerful help to religious feeling.'

'Ho! there's not much in that!' Carlyle retorted, as Allingham had expected him to. 'A great deal of sham and affectation is in the raptures people express about Nature; ecstasies over mountains and waterfalls, etcetera. I perceive that most people really get much the same amount of good out of all that that I do myself: I have a kind of content in it; but any kind of Nature does well enough. I used to find the moorlands answer my purpose as well as anything,—great, brown shaggy expanses, here and there a huge boulder-stone—"There you lie, God knows how long!"'

A drive to the Athenæum Club, with perhaps the sight of the River, of which he never tired, led to a declaration that 'any part of Nature is wonderful,' and he went on to describe his first view of the River Annan, 'running solemnly down with a slight rippling.'

Allingham asked if he dreamed at all of wonderful landscapes, as he himself often did.

'I do work upon Scenery sometimes,' Carlyle admitted; 'I dreamed every night, for about six months, of Ecclefechan as a wild wide moorland.'

On another occasion he told of two Scots rustics who 'found themselves by chance at Ailsa Craig; they stared in astonishment at the great sea-precipices. At last one said to the other, "Eh, Jock, Nature's deevilish!"'

On other days before the end of the year, there were various talks, one of which recalled Mrs. Carlyle's remarks about Maurice at the christening of Blunt's baby. She was no longer at hand to protect her husband against the im-

portunities of friends, and so he had to tell Allingham : ' I have for many years strictly avoided going to church, or having anything to do with Mumbo-Jumbo. I stood sponsor the other day to Sir Baldwyn Leighton's child ; I didn't like it, but was told it was only a form. I don't think it was right. I have an unfortunate difficulty in saying No.'

The *Memorials of a Quiet Life* affected him deeply. ' It brought back my old world,' he said. ' I used to *ride* to Hurstmonceaux in summer—couldn't stay on the road. I was strong enough for anything then.

' I was forced into resistance to the intellectual position of the men (Julius and Augustus Hare), but as to the women all was clear and right. They had no doubts. Julius used to attack me for my heresies, always giving me due and grave notice. But when the attack came, it was really so mild that it made no impression on me one way or another.'

As the year ended, he waded through the *Life of Beethoven*, edited by Moscheles, and told Allingham, perhaps with a hint of regret : ' I can perceive that there must be a great deal of expression in Beethoven's music, if I could understand it—as I never could. We are to think that the greatest thing a man can do is to write a sonata, which I cannot at all believe !'

' Goethe and Diderot,' he said later, ' are the only critics of pictures who seem to me to talk sense. Diderot explained what was done by the picture, and afterwards how it ought to have been done.'

According to the biographer of Diderot, he declared the true aim and reason of painting to be ' an address not to the eyes alone by colour, light, figure, but to heart and mind.'<sup>1</sup> In Diderot's own words : ' Without technique, no painting, to be sure ; but when all is said, I like ideas and the rendering and interpretation of them better than colour.'

As Carlyle said little, and wrote less, about art, his approval of Diderot is significant of his own beliefs.

<sup>1</sup> *Recollections* of John Viscount Morley, I, p. 94.

BOOK XXIX

THE SAGE OF CHELSEA

1873-75



## I

## AULD LANG SYNE

(1873)

JUST after the last stroke of midnight had hailed in the New Year, and Carlyle and his niece were sitting quietly together, a sound brought them to the window—a chorus of male voices in the street outside, singing *Auld Lang Syne*.

It was a touching little tribute, and Carlyle threw up the window and called ‘Good night!’ There were five or six men there, gazing up, and one of them returned the salutation eagerly; after which they all slipped silently away.

‘Truly the songs of Judah in a Babylonish land!’ Carlyle said, with a laugh, to Allingham when he called, and he afterwards quoted Burns’s lines:

We hung our fiddles up to dreep, &c.

Afterwards, he went on to describe Hogmanay in the streets of Edinburgh—‘hot punch and kissing.’<sup>1</sup>

## II

## LESLIE STEPHEN ON CARLYLE

(1873)

TWENTY years before, James Stephen of the Colonial Office, ‘Mr. Mother-country’, had been in the habit of fetching his long-legged son and namesake, James Fitz-James, to call at Cheyne Row, and by-and-by brought his younger son Leslie as well. Both sons, like all other young people who came near him, were attracted by Carlyle. In

<sup>1</sup> *William Allingham, A Diary*, p. 219.

a letter of 14.7.1871,<sup>1</sup> Leslie Stephen dealt faithfully with his friend James Russell Lowell for his bias against the man who had called the 'sublime war' in America a 'Nigger-Agony'.

'I don't think that you or any other Yankee can find it in your hearts to be quite just to Carlyle. Perhaps it is proper to feel more strongly than I can do about his political delinquencies; but I can't help loving the old fellow; and amongst the other reasons for this is that of all us literary professionals in London he is in his life the manliest and simplest. It is a pleasure to see anybody who has the courage to live so little spoilt by the flattery which might have choked him and made him a windbag. We, it seems to me, get spoilt more than some people in Cambridge, U.S., and he is a noble exception.'

From about the end of 1872, his elder brother James Fitz-James had formed the habit of joining Carlyle and Froude in their 'Sunday constitutionals', and continued to do so to the end.<sup>2</sup> One result of this friendship appears in a letter from Leslie Stephen to Mr. Holmes, which is amusing in the light of the dignified bearing and real importance of Sir James Fitz-James Stephen, to whose articles on 'Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity', then being published, he refers. He did not 'much approve of some of his sentiments,' and excuses them by adding: 'He has been a good deal corrupted by old Carlyle. I never before had so much respect for the extraordinary vigour of that person, till I saw how much influence he could exercise over a man who is little enough disposed to sit at anybody's feet. I see the prophet pretty often myself, and am almost equally repelled and attracted by him. Personally, indeed, I am simply attracted, for he is a really noble old cove and by far the best specimen of the literary gent we can at present produce. He has grown milder too with age. But politically and philosophically he talks a good deal of what I call nonsense. He is indeed a genuine poet and a great humorist, which makes even his nonsense attractive in its way. . . . He could not be made reasonable without ceasing to be Carlyle, so we must take what he can give and be grateful.'

It was of course the time of the apotheosis of Democracy and the Democratic principle, when to doubt the infallibility of the ballot-box, the absolute moral equality of all men,

<sup>1</sup> *Life and Letters of Leslie Stephen*, by F. W. Maitland, pp. 228, 230-2.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Sir James Fitz-James Stephen*, by Leslie Stephen, p. 302, &c.



and the sublime wisdom of majorities, was to declare oneself not merely a heretic but a savage, beyond the reach of enlightened modern thought. It was this that caused so many of those who genuinely revered and loved Carlyle to regard his political theories as at the least unfortunate and misguided, and there is nothing more piquant and entertaining than the various gymnastic feats of his apologists to square the blunt and outspoken opinions of their hero with their own fetish worship of the sacred principles underlying universal suffrage as a divine revelation specially vouchsafed to make the closing years of the Nineteenth Century the most glorious in world history; although today the world is painfully outgrowing its naïve faith in the millennium of the democratic state, and coming to realise at last that such a makeshift, based on a fundamental fallacy, can lead only to ultimate chaos. Carlyle was spoken of as the 'old prophet of Chelsea', but not seriously, not with unequivocal acceptance of his prophecies, but rather with a whimsical and tolerant good-nature and affection. It is one of the most amazing phenomena of our own day that we are being forced to acknowledge that he was in very truth a prophet, and a true prophet as well.

One day this January, sitting by the fireside talking with Norton, Carlyle remarked: 'I've been much understood in my time, and very lately now I was reading an article on Froude's view of Ireland in the last number of *Macmillan*, written by a man whom you may have seen, one Lecky, a willow pattern of a man, very shrill and voluble, but harmless, a pure herbivorous, nay, graminivorous creature, and he says with many terms of compliment that there's "a great and venerable author" who's done infinite harm to the world by preaching the gospel that *Might makes Right*, which is the very precise contrary to the truth I hold and have endeavoured to set forth, which is simply that *Right makes Might*. And I well remember when, in my younger days, the force of this truth first dawned on me, it was a sort of Theodice to me, a clue to many facts to which I have held on from that day. But it's little matter to me. I'll not undertake now to set myself right. If the truth is in my books, and they're worth reading, it'll be found out in time, and if it's not there, why then the sooner they perish the better.'<sup>3</sup>

It was at the time a popular misconception of all Carlyle's

<sup>3</sup> *Letters of Charles Eliot Norton*, I, p. 456.

teaching, so Leslie Stephen may be forgiven for discounting his political theories and affectionately regarding his fierce denunciations of democracy as an ebullition of bile which could be readily excused to an old man living in the past, with his life's work all behind him.

'The wonderful force and vitality of the old man,' he goes on, 'have enabled him completely to conquer Froude, who repeats his doctrines and makes them worse in the repetition. Froude . . . is a neighbour of mine, and I see a good deal of him as a contributor to *Fraser*. Nobody of my acquaintance is a greater puzzle. Sometimes I fancy that I like him very much, and sometimes I altogether turn against him. He has some very good and amiable qualities, but I never quite trust him.'

Charles Eliot Norton's opinion of Froude, formed during the same month, and only slightly modified by further meetings, is an interesting parallel to this: 'I have never taken to Froude, and his late performance in America<sup>4</sup> is not calculated to raise one's opinion of him. His face exhibits the cynical insincerity of his disposition. Carlyle is fond of him, and assured me I should like him better, if I knew him better. But he is an out and out disciple of Carlyle, in thought and in literary form; he, doubtless, has his good qualities which Carlyle sees, and Carlyle is not insensible to the flattery of being accepted as master by a man of Froude's capacity.'<sup>5</sup>

### III

#### CARLYLE AND NORTON AND OMAR KHAYYAM (1873)

**A**MONG the pleasantest experiences of this winter was the friendship that was formed between Carlyle and Charles Eliot Norton, and that swiftly grew into a rare intimacy and mutual respect. To Norton it was a privilege he valued highly; to Carlyle it was a source of constant pleasure and profit—mental and physical well-being so

<sup>4</sup> Froude had recently, in a lecture tour in America, 'held up the dirty linen' of the eternal quarrel between Ireland and Britain before the eyes of his American audiences—an indiscretion which was much resented, not only in this country, but also in America.

<sup>5</sup> *Letters of Charles Eliot Norton*, I, pp. 461-2.

interrelated that one tends to produce the other, and neither is long possible without the other. Carlyle found Norton 'a fine, gentle, intelligent and affectionate creature, with whom I have always a pleasant, soothing and interesting dialogue when we meet,—the only fault yesterday was, I liked it too well and staid too long.'

Carlyle was 'in excellent health, vigorous for his years,' and the American observed that 'Age has tempered whatever once may have been hard in him, and yet has taken from him nothing of keenness, of intelligence or richness of humour and imagination.' One afternoon they met by chance at John Forster's, where Carlyle was 'very cordial and entertaining,' and 'his vein of humorous reminiscence ran as freely as ever.' They had a walk together afterwards, during which Carlyle told Norton, in reply to questions, that he was 'perfectly healthy in every function and organ, but for the trembling of my hand which hinders writing, so that nowadays many reflections are born in me that will never find utterance.'<sup>1</sup>

Norton came frequently to Cheyne Row, and during a sharp illness, when he was confined indoors, the old man called as often as he could to enquire for him, and sit with him if possible. He was soon a firm favourite with the family—sister and mother and children—and especially with 'my little sweetheart Sally', one of Norton's little girls.

On January 9, Norton came in the afternoon, noticing on the way the announcement of the death of the Emperor Napoleon III. He carried the news to Carlyle, who exclaimed: 'Poor wretch! And so he's dead. I never thought to feel so much pity for the man. Ah dear! and so the poor man has gone out of this wonderful welter and confusion in which he'd dwelt so long. Dear me, dear me! The mystery and the awe of death round him now, and not one good result from his life. A very pitiable and moving end.'

'I never talked with him but once, at a dinner at the Stanleys', where I sat next him and he tried to convert me to his notions; but such ideas as he possessed had no real fire or capacity for flame in them. His mind was a kind of extinct sulphur pit, and gave out a kind of smell of rotten sulphur. He was very fit for his nation, though, to be sure, they say he hadn't one drop of pure French

<sup>1</sup> *Letters of Charles Eliot Norton*, I, p. 420 et seq.

blood in his veins. A tragi-comedian, or comic-tragedian—and dying in this lamentable ignominious sort of way. He must have wished that a cannon ball had smashed the brains of him at Saarbrück or Sedan.’<sup>2</sup>

A week or so later, after another visit, and a walk in the Park, Norton noted in his Journal: ‘He was in a most pleasant mood;—as I grow familiar with him, and a certain intimacy unites us, his character becomes more and more open and delightful, and I feel a real affection for him. He is one of the most sympathetic of men.’<sup>2</sup>

‘The chief and increasing pleasure and interest of my days here,’ he wrote to James Russell Lowell on January 23, ‘come from intercourse with Carlyle. . . . I fancy there is more of him in *Sartor Resartus* than in his other books; at least his talk reminds me more frequently of that than of the others. Perhaps this is in part because he talks often of his early years, and falls back into trains of thought or feeling that first found their expression in *Sartor Resartus*. Of his histories, it is plain that Cromwell and the Commonwealth occupy a far greater share of his interest than the *French Revolution*, or *Friedrich*.’

Towards the end of 1872, he had told Carlyle as they walked together about a little book he had received some years before from Mrs. Burne-Jones, wife of the artist—the quatrains of *Omar Khayyam*. She had said that she knew not who the author could be, although Ruskin had left a letter for him with her, to be forwarded if ever she discovered his name. Norton had been so much struck with the volume that he had enquired again of her, and by this time she was able to say that the translator was ‘a certain Reverend Edward FitzGerald’, who lived somewhere in Norfolk and spent much of his time in his boat.

‘The Reverend Edward FitzGerald!’ Carlyle echoed, explosively. ‘Why, he’s no more Reverend than I am! He’s a very old friend of mine. I’m surprised, if the book be as good as you tell me it is, that my old friend has never mentioned it to me.’ He went on to give a further account of FitzGerald.

In the course of the following weeks,<sup>3</sup> Norton gave a copy of the book to Carlyle, whose verdict on the author was, ‘a modest, shy, studious man, of much character, much loved by Thackeray and others. I used to see him often,

<sup>2</sup> *Letters of Charles Eliot Norton*, I, pp. 452–3, 458.

<sup>3</sup> *Letters of Edward FitzGerald*, II, pp. 154–7.

but he never said to me anything of this book of his that you think so well of.' This, without any more direct expression of opinion, was enough to show that Carlyle had at least been favourably impressed by the rendering of the old Persian's colourful if somewhat defeatist wisdom.

On Thursday, February 6, Norton found 'poor little Allingham' with Carlyle when he called at three o'clock, and soon after Froude came in, with news of an article he had just been reading, which Leslie Stephen had offered him for *Fraser*. It dealt with Strauss's book and the general condition of religious thought, but he had found it too strong and outspoken for his magazine. Norton urged that 'it was well that such men as Stephen should speak the truth plainly, . . . saying that it seemed to me the great sin of English society was insincere profession, pretending to believe that in which it had no belief whatsoever.'

Carlyle's sympathies were divided. He was wearied by talk of these matters, talk which he had always regarded as fruitless and vain, as well as, perhaps, in doubtful taste; but he approved moral honesty, hated 'paltering with the conscience', and applauded 'manly outspokenness in the face of an hypocritical public.'

When they went out walking, they fell naturally into twos, Allingham going with Froude, and Carlyle talked much to Norton of FitzGerald and his sad life—'a man of genial nature, son of a rich man and a handsome woman, many children, and the family always quarrelling, and living in detachments in different houses on the father's various estates. After a while Edward FitzGerald with a fortune of £800 a year went off to live alone; for many years in Tennyson's poor days he used to give him £300 out of his annual income. He became intimate with Bernard Barton<sup>4</sup> who lived with an only daughter,—"a clumsy lump". After Barton's death she went as housekeeper or companion into the family of one of the Gurneys. FitzGerald took a notion that she was attached to him, and he ought to marry her. So they were married, and he brought her to London, but she was awkward and uncongenial, and he miserable. He treated her with utmost consideration, but after a year he said to her that it was intolerable and they must part, and he divided his income equally with her, and went off to solitude and became more shamefaced than ever, and lives now much alone, in a big boat in summer, in which

<sup>4</sup> The Quaker poet of Woodbridge, where FitzGerald lived.

he sails round the coast, and lives in the presence of the melancholy sea.'

He 'was a warm friend of Thackeray, but fell off from companionship with him when he got into grand society. Lived at one time at Naseby, as solitary and gloomy a place as there is in England.' Now he wrote regularly, once a year, to Carlyle, but 'such was the modesty of the man that he never so much as mentioned the name of Omar Khayyam to him.'<sup>5</sup>

Carlyle had an appointment at Forster's house, and as they approached it the party split up, Allingham going off alone, and Froude and Norton continuing their walk.

#### IV

#### CARLYLE'S WILL

(1873)

THE appointment at Forster's was to sign his will, which Forster had been helping him to draw up, giving him valuable legal assistance by which his property was distributed eight years later. It was witnessed by the butler and a lawyer's clerk who attended for the purpose. Dr. John Carlyle had been advising a move of the sort for some time past, and Forster reduced it to a very simple matter, and these two were the executors and trustees first appointed.

'In regard to all business matters about my books . . . Copyrights, Editions, and dealings with Booksellers and others in relation thereto,' it read, 'John Forster's advice is to be taken as supreme and complete, better than my own ever could have been. His faithful, wise and ever punctual care about all that has been a miracle of generous helpfulness, literally invaluable to me in that field of things.'

The gift of Craigenputtock estate and the bequest of the *Cromwell* and *Frederick* books to Harvard have already been mentioned; there were as well sundry kind little legacies. For the niece who was his housekeeper and secretary he provided mainly by gifts of money during his lifetime. 'And it is my express instruction,' he wrote, 'that, *since*

<sup>5</sup> *Letters of Charles Eliot Norton*, I, pp. 464-5.

*I cannot be laid in the Grave at Haddington, I shall be placed beside my Father and Mother in the Churchyard of Ecclefechan.'*

Thus modestly was worded the veto of Westminster Abbey. It was not mentioned; but the wishes of Dean Stanley and his friends could be guessed, and Carlyle did not dissemble, when asked by Gerald Blunt, for instance, what he thought of the fashionable place for funerals. 'Westminster Abbey would require a general gaol delivery of rogues before any man could be at peace there.'

His brother John was rich and childless, and had no need of money now, so the property was divided equally among the remaining five brothers and sisters. To this extent the ancient rule, equality is equity, was ratified by Carlyle's will; and it went even farther in the direction of equality than old custom could approve in those days, for his sisters received what was left them as their separate and independent property.

He disregarded the cash value of his manuscripts, and only one appeared to him of literary importance—the *Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle*. He gave his niece the draft of it and the original letters, while the fair copy was bequeathed to Froude, who 'had lovingly promised' to 'take precious charge' of it—'and I solemnly request him to do his best and wisest in the matter, as I feel assured he will. There is incidentally a quantity of Autobiographical Record in my Notes to this Manuscript; but except as subsidiary and elucidative of the text I put no value on such: *express Biography of me I had really rather that there should be none*. James Anthony Froude, John Forster and my brother John, will make earnest survey of the Manuscript and its subsidiaries there or elsewhere, in respect to this as well as to its other bearings; their united utmost candour and impartiality (taking always James Anthony Froude's practicality along with it) will evidently furnish a better judgment than mine can be. The Manuscript is by no means ready for publication; nay, the questions, How, When (after what delay, seven, ten years) it, or any portion of it, should be published, are still dark to me; but on all such points James Anthony Froude's practical summing up and decision is to be taken as mine.

'My other Manuscripts I leave to my brother John.'

But on John's suggestion, they were given instead to Mary, delivered to her in advance as a gift.

## V

## A LETTER OF ADVICE

(1873)

**A**MONG the many letters Carlyle received from unknown correspondents, many of them seeking advice on spiritual matters from the Sage of Chelsea, was one from a young married man in Glasgow, who was in grave distress over the question of religion, suffering from the old struggle between the desire for truth, and a feeling of guilt in seeking it at the cost of creeds, which was the common legacy of a thousand years of unthinking credulity and blind acceptance.

To him Carlyle wrote at great length, on February 7 :

‘ I grieve much to find you so entangled, sunk over head and ears in the black and disgusting outburst of Atheism and Spiritual Confusion which has lately come upon us, and seems to be carrying our afflicted generation into depths of the “ Blackness of Darkness ” it never knew before. I compare this ugly Spiritual upburst to the Physical one of Solway Moss (in 1783),—both of them proceeded out of what we may call Dropsy : Solway Moss had long been dropsical, from the partial stoppage of a little brook ; our generation has been growing so, ever since the times of Oliver Cromwell, by the stoppage of all real Reform, and the introduction of the “ Putty and Varnish ” kind instead (in a word by continual hypocrisy and unverity persisted in so long) ; and now it rolls and rushes in this proud manner ; covering the green earth and face of Nature with liquid Peat, and miscellaneous and unfathomable slobber, such as the World never saw before !

‘ I deliberately advise you to quit all that, and rigorously lock it away from you in silence till your own mind at least re-acquire its clearness, and can serenely look into what is written in yourself ; and read, as all true men in all ages have been able to do, what the finger of the Most High has written there. You may depend on it these long-eared Sages of “ Science ” very “ falsely so-called ”,—as men without reverence or piety of mind—have not any word to say on this subject ; and that every faithful and humble man possessing those first qualities of manhood *has* a word, and for himself a conclusive word, to say upon it. Lock *them*



all away I seriously advise you, and try by all good methods (especially by more and more faithful performance of every Duty that is already clear to you) to get hold again of "that Light, which lighteneth every Man that cometh into the World." One of your first discoveries and conclusions I think will be, that no Entity could have gifted *you* with longings towards nobleness; with love and pious feeling and the *infinite* sense of Right and Wrong, unless He had himself such qualities to give away!

'Logic, I believe, will do nothing farther for you;—but *thus far* all blow-pipes, crucibles, mineralogical hammers, *Origin of Species*, *Descents of Man*, etc. etc. will never, and can never bring you.

'For the rest I would advise you (so far as my light goes) to give up the Spiritual training of your children to their dear and loving Mother, who will teach them everlasting Truths,—precious and everlasting, though clouded over in their vesture at present, far beyond what long-eared Owls-of-Minerva, with their Blow-pipes and scientific gear, have the least notion of, or are ever likely to have.

'Your dear children, if they question *you* on such subjects, you can for the present study to answer evasively, though with cautious admission of whatever *soul* of truth may be in their bits of beliefs,—which will be more and more possible for you the farther you yourself advance in real Truth: speak to them at all times with perfect veracity, and above all things study to awaken in their minds the feelings of reverence, of pious awe, and of the infinite, eternal difference between right and wrong; which is the corner stone and foundation of all real knowledge and intelligence, as of all other worth in Man.

'And withal, know in general that for yourself too there is no other road towards Light and Peace, but ever more perfectly *Doing* what is commanded you, what your hand findeth to do. "Doubt of any kind," says the wisest man of these latter ages most truly, "is of Infinite nature and cannot be removed, except by action."'

## VI

## ABRAHAM HAYWARD IS DISGRUNTLED

(1873)

ABRAHAM HAYWARD was still a leading figure in fashionable society, his slight, bent form familiar in St. James's Street and Pall Mall,<sup>1</sup> and he was now more than ever conscious of illuminating England through the Reviews; but nevertheless he was a disappointed man. He had not prospered as he had expected at the law. A friendly Lord Chancellor could 'give him silk', make him a Queen's Counsel, and he amused society, from which the legal profession in those days held aloof, by answering questions as to what the Benchers were. But neither Chancellor nor judges could induce the Benchers to make him one of themselves; and his vanity was so hurt by failing to compel them that he gave up the Law altogether, and took to political writing.

He was unsuccessful, however, in seeking a 'place', and perhaps the sight of Disraeli's glory in the seventies made him more sour than ever. In 1873, when he was over threescore and ten himself, he was embittered for the remainder of his life against Carlyle by a trifling incident. He had made something of a sensation by relating as cold history the story Mrs. Norton had used to curdle people's blood about the Frederick of Carlyle's book—an old libel that was the plot of a play performed before the Kaiser in Vienna.<sup>2</sup>

The watch was set in Frederick's camp, and all in darkness sleeping. Save one who in a vigil lamp forbidden light was keeping. . . . His head was bent in act to write, the memories gushing o'er him, When through the gloom of gathering night, stood Frederick's self before him!

Lights had been forbidden upon pain of death, when the officer was caught by Frederick in the very act of 'finishing a letter to his newly married wife by the light of a taper'. He prayed for mercy, but was answered: 'Finish your letter, sir, and add a postscript: "Before this reaches you, I shall be shot for disobedience of orders."' And

<sup>1</sup> *London Letters*, by G. W. Smalley, I, pp. 322, 324, &c.

<sup>2</sup> *A Tour in Germany and the Austrian Empire*, by John Russell, II, pp. 187-8.

shot he was next morning, according to Mrs. Norton, confirmed by Hayward, who had never concealed his opinion that he himself deserved a larger share than he had received of the credit due to the pioneers of German thought and literature. This may have made it a pleasure to him to tell the terrible story, for of course if it were true Frederick could not be a rational hero at all, as represented by his latest historian, but a vain and silly despot, on the level of Nero and Caligula.

Unexpectedly a *Spectator* writer declared that it was not true. Hayward retorted that he had tested it 'when Mrs. Norton was writing her song some years before'. Macaulay had referred him to the 1797 edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, where the anecdote appeared. Macaulay had 'never doubted it', which was surely as good as demonstration. But Mrs. Norton had misgivings. She wrote to Lord Napier, bidding him ask Carlyle, who replied, on March 3 :

'Will you present my homages and very kind remembrances to Mrs. Norton, and say that there is not anywhere in nature the faintest vestige of evidence for that poor story about Friedrich and the officer writing to his mother, &c. ; and that I clearly believe it to be as perfect a fable as ever a spasmodic fool invented in his own idle brain or caught out of empty rumour, and was at the pains to write down in some vague anecdote book or sentimental tirade, and send floating into a foolish century ! In no work historical, or in the least pretending to be historical, did I ever find it mentioned or hinted at, as indeed it would have greatly surprised me to do ; for the thing is not only untrue, but inconceivable and incredible ; unworthy of a moment's notice from anybody that has gained the faintest notion of Friedrich's character and ways.'<sup>3</sup>

Sir William Stirling Maxwell, anxious to "save the face" of his friend Hayward, could go no further than to say,— 'Carlyle's note is very absurd. I have rarely seen *Not true* put into so many needless words.' Lord Napier passed on the letter to Mrs. Norton, and she to Hayward, who had to leave the victory with the scribe in the *Spectator*, but privately vituperated Carlyle. He nursed his wrath, and had the satisfaction,—at over eighty !—of being 'revenged' after Carlyle's death.

<sup>3</sup> *Correspondence of Abraham Hayward, Q.C.*, by H. E. Carlisle, Vol. II, pp. 249-51 and 317-18.

## VII

## A CHASTENED LITERARY ASPIRANT

(1873)

AS always now, the spate of letters and callers, seeking advice, seeking elucidation, seeking help, or merely seeking a new and piquant experience to talk about, continued unabated. Once after a short absence from home Carlyle came back to a pile of over four hundred cards left by callers in the interim! In March, 'some goose or other' sent from Rome a letter to Emerson for Carlyle to deliver, which Maggie Welsh, who was staying with him at the time, put 'under lock and key' for him. Another 'goose' wrote from Durham demanding, in order to settle some dispute there, 'What is the meaning of *Sartor Resartus*? '—a naïve request that often wearied an old man who had long ceased to think that early performance possessed anything of merit. 'We confiscate his penny stamp and fling him into the fire,' he reported to his brother. A mate in the German Merchant Service wrote, in *Cursiv-schrift* which was illegible to Carlyle, and partly in English almost equally so, 'whole acres of tumultuous stupidity' which required an answer of sorts; and so it went on.

But no genuine appeal was ever disregarded, and he continued quietly with those innumerable acts of anonymous charity that were most characteristic of him.

'I am often thinking of poor Margaret Stewart's loss of her fine brood mare, which will be very considerable to her, poor Soul,' he said, in a letter of March 29 to his brother John. 'If you, who know her circumstances better, think she really *can* support the evil, and get over it without too much difficulty, perhaps it would be wise, and charitable too, to leave her alone just now, (and *in* the end strengthened by consciousness of victory!)—But if otherwise, and we two can do anything, I will cheerfully go with you on the terms usual to us in such cases.' An example of singular delicacy of feeling which not all charitably-minded persons would be capable of achieving.

One of the many strangers who wrote requesting an interview, which was later granted, was a young Canadian doctor, John Beattie Crozier, whose parents had emigrated from Liddesdale on the Borders, and who had come to

London in 1872 in search of a creed and a career in Literature. He began by reading hard, as men used to do as a necessary preparation for the practice of Literature, and he was charmed by the philosophy of Spencer, while he found *Sartor Resartus* indigestible, and begged an interview in the hope of elucidation. Carlyle readily acceded to his request, although he made a strict stipulation that the call should not exceed ten minutes.

Accordingly, one day in March, 1873, Dr. Crozier presented himself at the house in Chelsea, and was impressed first of all by finding the street lined with carriages for some distance from the door, and a large number of men and women in the waiting-room, chatting and repeating what Carlyle had said to them, while they awaited their turn to go up to him.

Dr. Crozier found Carlyle in the familiar dressing-gown—‘an old man with grey beard and a thick mop of iron-grey hair.’ He noticed the shaking right hand and the faltering step, but was struck by the healthy bloom in the cheeks, and the ‘hawk-like clearness and penetration’ of the eyes.

Carlyle began abruptly with an allusion to his visitor’s letter: ‘No,’ he said, ‘neither you nor I have had such a bad time as Goethe. He was so depressed by the loss of his ideal as a young man, that he at last determined to end it all by suicide, and feeling that the passive forms of self-destruction, such as letting yourself fall off precipices, or falling on your sword, were ignoble, and that the only manly way was that of the Emperor Otho who with his own hand plunged the dagger into his breast, he procured a weapon, but after trying night after night to execute the deed on himself and not being able to screw his courage to the sticking-point, threw away the dagger, and resolved to go on living and make the best of it. And now, my man, you will just have to do the same; you must just go on in the best way you can, in the sure belief that the seeds of the Ideal, that are planted by God in every honest mind, will bear fruit, and you will in time find the work in which you can labour with satisfaction to yourself and to the world.’

He gave the young doctor a sudden sharp look, and asked: ‘But what may you be?’

Crozier explained that he had just started practice in London, but had come from Canada primarily with the

idea of 'going in for Literature'. Carlyle stopped him quickly.

'No, no, that will not do,' he exclaimed. 'You'd better stick to your profession, young man. It's time enough to think of Literature when you've cleared your own mind and have something worth saying. Medicine is a noble calling.' He ignored the visitor's discomfiture, and went on: 'Yes, it is a noble profession, but sadly fallen into quackery in these days. The least known men in it are often the best. The best doctor I ever knew was a village practitioner in Scotland'—by whom he meant, as appears from correspondence, Dr. Russell of Thornhill. 'He could look through you,' he continued, 'in an instant; but the great London doctors that come about me here, drive up in their carriages and are off again (after looking at their watches mainly) leaving neither me nor themselves better or worse than before. The public is a great ass!'

After some further talk, he began questioning, as if he had suddenly remembered something: 'Which of our authors have you been reading, that you have been brought into this frame of mind?'—alluding to Crozier's letter to him. The doctor began to enumerate, but had only got as far as Mill and Buckle and Darwin when he was interrupted with: 'Oh, aye! Poor Mill!' and a description of that old friend and the termination of their friendship. He praised the father, James Mill, 'a great, big, burly fellow whom I used to see at the India House.' He denounced Buckle as a blockhead, describing how people had kept pestering him to read Buckle's book, and how he had done so at last, and the only good thing he ever remembered hearing of him was his affection for his mother!

By this time, the doctor thought it wiser to refrain from any mention of Herbert Spencer, and for a while he was charmed to hear Carlyle describe his early days 'with a simplicity and absence of pose' and a transparency that were delightful. He went on to tell how he had been led to abandon his belief in the accepted dogmas of Christianity. 'As for Jesus Christ himself,' he remarked, 'he was a good young man disgusted with the shams and hypocrisies of his time which his soul could not abide; and venturing with calm indifference as to his fate into the lion's den of the Chief Priests and Scribes at Jerusalem, nobly met his death, as indeed such as he in all times and places have to do. But now we have reached the comfortable conclusion that

God is a myth, that the soul is a gas, and the next world a coffin ; and have no longer any need in consequence of such heroic souls.'

'Yes,' intercalated Crozier, seeing his chance and not knowing Carlyle well enough to appreciate his satiric vein, 'Herbert Spencer has shown that mind is merely a molecular motion in brain substance as heat is in iron ; and that is just my difficulty, and why I felt that your explanation in *Sartor* did not quite——'

'Spencer !' Carlyle burst out. 'Shown !' He 'went off into a peal of derisive laughter that almost raised the roof.'

'And so you have been meddling with Spencer, have you ?' he went on presently. 'He was brought to me by Lewes, and a more conceited young man I thought I had never seen. He seemed to think himself just a perfect Owl of Minerva for knowledge. You'll get little good out of him, young man,' he added, with a fierce look.

This was altogether too much for Crozier, who was having his idols hailed from their pinnacles one after another. He said no more ; and Carlyle, seeing from the clock that the stipulated ten minutes were exhausted long ago, rose and shook hands very cordially, as if their chat had been altogether delightful, hoped that he might hear from the young man again, and saw him to the door.

But Crozier had the candour to feel that he might have been mistaken in some things, and sat down to read the *Life of John Sterling*, which charmed him so much that he turned to the early essays, and described them as 'work which took serious literature out of the hands of the mere *littérateur* who had played the clown too long, and made it the moral force it is to-day. . . . It was owing largely to the noble panegyrics on great literature scattered through them, that I was kept steady to my own poor task through years of disappointment and failure.'

Naturally, he availed himself of the implied leave to call again. He saw Carlyle in the summer of 1874, and in 1875 obtained his signature in his support when he became a member of the London Library. Of Ruskin Carlyle once said to him : 'He has a fine sense of beauty, but has lived too much in the ideal to be quite level with the present world.'

Two years later, having completed an essay setting forth his contribution 'towards the solution of the world-problem', Crozier recollected that Carlyle had bidden him come and

see him when in any difficulty. He wished to be helped to a publisher; but the old man could only say, now, very quietly, that he had quite done with editors and people of that kind, and he referred him to Mr. Harrison of the London Library, who received him kindly and helped him with advice.<sup>1</sup>

## VIII

## MORE ABOUT OMAR KHAYYAM

(1873)

FRIDAY, March 28, was 'a beautiful spring day', writes Norton,<sup>1</sup> 'warm and soft, with a country fragrance in the London air', as he and Froude accompanied Carlyle from Chelsea through Kensington Gardens. Carlyle seemed 'a little weary, perhaps weakened by the mild, unbracing weather; but was full of kindness and humour. . . . He had not taken to Omar Khayyam—"the old Mohammedan blackguard"—had found his scepticism too blank and his solution of life in drink too mean.'

However, as soon as Mrs. Burne-Jones heard from Norton that he had found a friend of FitzGerald, she sent him the letter Ruskin had left in her charge some years before that it might be forwarded. In sending it on to Carlyle, Norton wrote that 'if he did not object to giving FitzGerald pleasure, on the score of his translation of the verses of the "old Mohammedan blackguard", Mrs. Burne-Jones would be much obliged to him if he would put the right address upon the letter and forward it to the translator.'

Somewhat to his surprise, Carlyle sent on both letters, Norton's and Ruskin's, and the forwarding note accompanying them might be misunderstood if one overlooks that what was sent disclosed that in conversation with Norton Carlyle had called Omar an 'old Mohammedan blackguard':

'Mr. Norton, the writer of that note, is a distinguished American (co-editor for a long time of the *North American Review*), an extremely amiable, intelligent, and worthy man; with whom I have had some pleasant walks, dialogues and other communications, of late months;—in the course of

<sup>1</sup> *My Inner Life*, by J. Beattie Crozier, pp. 283-9, 534, &c.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters of C. E. Norton*, I, pp. 470-1, et seq.



which he brought to my knowledge, for the first time, your notable Omar Khayyam, and insisted on giving me a copy from the third edition, which I now possess and duly prize. From him too, by careful cross-questioning, I identified, beyond dispute, the hidden "FitzGerald", the Translator;—and indeed found that his complete silence, and unique modesty in regard to said meritorious and successful performance, was simply a feature of my own *Edward F.*! The translation is excellent; the Book itself a kind of jewel in its way. I do Norton's mission without the least delay, as you perceive. Ruskin's message to you passes through my hands sealed.'<sup>2</sup>

The letter from Ruskin, FitzGerald said in replying to Carlyle, was dated 1863. 'It is lucky for both R. and me that you did not read his note; a sudden fit of fancy . . . kindly meant.'

## IX

## THE INSPIRED RED HERRING

(1873)

ON Monday, April 4, Norton was dining at John Forster's with Carlyle and others, 'a pleasant dinner, for Forster was in far better condition than in the early winter, and in one of his mild and simple moods. The effect that Carlyle has on him is always beneficial, and their humours played well together. Carlyle was very sweet, a little quiet, but ready to be animated and vivacious.'<sup>1</sup>

When the ladies left, Norton began to tell how the other day Froude had said to him, 'It's a great shame that someone shouldn't keep a record of Carlyle's talk. He never fails to say something memorable or admirably humorous. Why, he called somebody the other day "an inspired red herring".' Norton at once wanted to know who it was who deserved such a label. But Froude had forgotten. Some days afterwards, Norton asked Carlyle himself to whom he had applied the phrase, but he too had forgotten, and added that he 'trusted he was not to be made accountable for all the extravagant phrases he had uttered in talk—

<sup>2</sup> *Letters of Edward FitzGerald*, II, pp. 154-6.

<sup>1</sup> *Letters of C. E. Norton*, I, pp. 487-8.

there would be "very many to rise in judgment" against him—but he wouldn't disown "the inspired red herring".

At this point in Norton's repetition of the story, Forster burst out,—'By Heavens! my dear Norton, I heard that precious utterance, but I, too, have forgotten to whom it was fitted. Mrs. Forster will remember.'

So when they went into the drawing-room she was asked—and forced to admit that she also had forgotten! Whereupon Forster 'called down wrath on her and himself.'

Next morning at breakfast Norton received a note which contained nothing but a name—'Henry Thomas Buckle'!

## X

## THE DEATH OF MILL

(1873)

JOHN STUART MILL'S last days were coming to a close at Avignon, where he had been for some time withdrawing himself more and more, so that even two daughters of Queen Victoria were refused an interview.<sup>1</sup> He had been reading Carlyle 'with pleasure' to the end. On May 8, he said, with resignation: 'My work is done'; and so died.

Next day Norton called on Carlyle for one more walk—their last together, as he was about to return to America—and when they went out, told him that the evening papers announced the death of his old friend. Carlyle was deeply moved, in spite of the many years of estrangement, and wrote to his brother: 'A great black sheet of mournful more or less tragic memories . . . rushed down upon me: Poor Mill, he, too, has worked out his Life Drama in sight of me; and that scene, too, has closed before my old eyes—though he was so much my junior!'

As he walked with Norton through the Chelsea streets towards the Park, he voiced his thoughts aloud:

'What! John Mill dead! Dear me, dear me! John Mill! How did he die, and where?'

'At Avignon,' Norton could tell him, but nothing more than what was in the evening papers; however, he described

<sup>1</sup> *John Stuart Mill*, by A. Bain, p. 163, and pp. 154-9; *Idem*, by W. L. Courtenay, p. 165; *Letters of J. S. Mill*, II, p. 220.

how he had found Mill's house at Blackheath vacant when he went there last autumn with Chauncey Wright to see him; and how he had missed him when he was a few weeks in London in the winter.

'It's so long since I've seen him,' said Carlyle, 'and he was the friendliest of men to me when I was in need of friends. Dear me! It's all over now. I never knew a finer, tenderer, more sensitive or modest soul among the sons of men. There never was a more generous creature than he, nor a more modest. He and I were great friends, and when I was beginning to work on my *French Revolution* there was no man from whom I got such help. He had lived a long while as a youth in France, and he'd made an excellent collection of books, and he'd observed much, and the Revolution had been a great interest to him. I learned much from talk with him, and nothing would satisfy him but that I should have all his books that could be of any sort of use to me. And he was always forward with the most generous encouragement, and as the book went on he began to think there never had been such a book written in the world—a very foolish piece of friendliness—and when the first volume was finished . . . he . . . needs must take it to that woman, Mrs. Taylor, in whom he had discovered so much that no one else could find. And so she had it at her house at the riverside at Kingston' where 'the housemaid lighted the fire with it.'

This led to talk about Mrs. Taylor, and Norton heard the story told to Gavan Duffy and others, with a few details not elsewhere repeated. Of her distress, or lack of it, when the manuscript was burned, 'I never heard that it very much diminished her content in life,' Carlyle declared. She was a woman with 'dark, black, hard eyes, and an inquisitive nature', pondering on many questions that worried her, to which she could get no answers,—and she found her husband dull. W. J. Fox managed to persuade Mill, with great difficulty, to see her, and 'that man, who, up to that time, had never so much as looked at a female creature, not even a cow, in the face, found himself opposite those great dark eyes that were flashing unutterable things while he was discoursing the utterable.'

The intimacy grew, until she and her husband determined to separate, and she took a small house at Kingston-on-Thames, where Mill was in the habit of calling on Saturdays, accompanied sometimes by Carlyle, who pleased Norton by

confirming what others had said, that their relations had been entirely innocent, and their only fault that 'being deeply attached to each other, they had been perhaps too indifferent to Mr. Taylor.' But Carlyle professed ignorance of 'this inner part of their experience', and in any case would have said nothing to the discredit of either party.

'When Taylor died,' he concluded, Mill 'married the widow, and then he gave up all society, and refused all invitations. . . . Hard things had been said,' but 'they were always said to be very happy together, till she died, and now he's gone after her whom he loved.'<sup>2</sup>

There followed naturally many eulogies of the philosopher who in his short Parliamentary career had, in Gladstone's opinion, lent dignity to the House through his high-principled bearing, and who had presented the unique spectacle of a politician who would neither canvass for votes nor allow others to canvass for him, who would not palter with his conscience on any political grounds, and who was probably the first and last Member who entered the House with no other desire and intention than to perform his duty nobly and without thought of self. His *Autobiography*, upon which he had been engaged for some time before his death, was published, but Carlyle was only saddened by it. 'You have lost nothing by missing it,' he told his brother. 'I have never read a more uninteresting book, nor I should say a sillier, by a man of sense, integrity, and seriousness of mind . . . little more of human in it than if it had been done by a thing of mechanised iron: "Autobiography of a Steam-Engine." . . . The thought of poor Mill . . . gives me real pain and sorrow.'

There was no blame in this verdict, only pity; for who would not pity Mill who understands his *Autobiography*? Starting Greek at three years old! As he sadly said himself to Caroline Fox, 'I never was a boy.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Letters of C. E. Norton*, I, pp. 493-501, supplemented by notes of D. A. W.'s conversations with Norton.

<sup>3</sup> *Memories of Old Friends*, by Caroline Fox, I, p. 163.

## XI

## FAREWELL TO NORTON

(1873)

A FEW days earlier, Carlyle had called on Norton with Forster to say good-bye. He asked Norton to fetch the children, so that he might see them once more, particularly his 'little sweetheart' Sally, whom he took on his knee and kissed tenderly, as he gave her a small package for a parting gift. She ran out of the room to open it as soon as possible, and came back with sparkling eyes, 'brimful of sweetness and pleasure', and ran to her father to show him her present—a little gold locket 'in which the tender-hearted childless old man had put a lock of his own hair.'

'Here's a love token for you, my poor little dear,' he said, 'with an old man's love and blessing. May all good be yours!'

Norton's little daughter Margaret, who had 'a strong sense of individual rights and interests', naturally longed also for a gift, and went over quite fearlessly to Carlyle, to investigate the capacious pockets of his greatcoat. He was talking at the time, and Norton called her away, thankful that, as he thought, Carlyle had not noticed her. Later, he asked Norton to come for him on Friday, May 9, for the final walk together during which he learned of the death of Mill. Norton arrived at Cheyne Row rather later than he had intended, and the moment he was seated Carlyle produced an envelope, and said:

'And how are all your little folks? That wee thing that I hear you call Gretchen, poor little dear, she thought I was very unmindful of her the other day, and came feeling in my pocket for the gift I ought to have brought her. And so I've put up a little packet for her, that you shall take to her with my blessing.'

On the envelope were the words, in blue pencil, laboriously traced out by a trembling right hand: 'Dear little Maggie Norton's little conquest in England! To Papa's care.—T. C., 9 May, 1873.' It contained some American postage stamps, and four little coins in American silver or nickel money, and inside was written: 'Sent to Frank Chelsea Autographs; couldn't act in that capacity; go now, as *spolia opima*, a better road!—T. C. (May, 1873).'

'I've been thinking about your voyage,' Carlyle went on to Norton, 'and I've laid out here a few books that might amuse you. There is nothing that requires prolonged attention, for I can understand that on a voyage you need something to fill up minutes and not hours. They're old books that maybe I should never open again if I kept them on my shelves.' Norton had a weakness for treasures of that kind, and was delighted. There were three,—*Scaligeriana*, *Anecdotes Arabes*, and 'an old beggar's' story, *The Autobiography of Bamfylde Moore Carew*, which would be of some interest to Norton, as it contained much about America, and a curious picture of Virginian life in days gone by.

Begging Miss Welsh to parcel up the books, so that they should be ready when Norton sent his servant for them, Carlyle went upstairs to prepare for their walk, and Miss Welsh, entertaining the visitor, told him of the old man's deep regret at his departure. She had suggested too late that he should put a little photograph of himself on the vacant side of the locket he gave Sally, and he wished he had thought of it; but his many acts of kindness were all typically performed without a thought of self.

Heavy showers of rain terminated their walk prematurely, and Norton hailed a hansom, dropping Carlyle near Forster's house. As they shook hands for the last time: 'Good-bye,' Carlyle said. 'I'm sorry to have you go. Our intercourse this winter has been very human.'<sup>1</sup>

'Yesterday,' he wrote to his brother on May 10, 'I took leave of Norton, who came down to have one last walk with me, but to our own regret the walk was interrupted by rain, and he had to call a cab, being rather on the sick list at present. . . . I was really sorry to part with Norton and his interesting Family of little Motherless children, good Sister, and venerable Mother; he has been through Winter the most *human* of all the company I, from time to time, had. A pious-minded, cultivated, intelligent, much-suffering man.'

<sup>1</sup> *Letters of C. E. Norton*, I, pp. 490-1 and 493-4, supplemented by notes of D. A. W.'s conversations with Norton.





CARLYLE, BY J. MACNEILL WHISTLER

(Glasgow Corporation Art Galleries)

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## XII

## WHISTLER'S 'CARLYLE'

(1873)

PERHAPS the oddest figure in London that year was the painter, J. MacNeill Whistler, living at Chelsea. He was a choleric and tough little man from Massachusetts, who had learned art and much else at Paris. If he had 'behaved himself', we are told, he would have been President of the Royal Academy; but he was 'jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel, seeking the bubble reputation' with a paint-brush; and 'artistically, he felt himself more distinguished than any' other members of the Royal Academy, which led naturally to reprisals, since the Royal Academician is after all only a man. The portrait of his mother was sent up in 1872, and at first rejected, being admitted finally only because resignations were threatened. It is said that never another work of his appeared there.

Madame Venturi, who was his friend, and Carlyle's as well, determined then that he should paint Carlyle. Whistler used to go often to see her, and met Mazzini, who was charming to him, at her house. One day she brought Carlyle to visit him, hoping for the best, and as it happened the scene was well set. The *Mother* was there, so that Carlyle could not but see it, and seemed 'to feel in it a certain fitness of things, as Madame Venturi meant he should. He liked the simplicity of it, the old lady sitting with her hands folded on her lap—and he said he would be painted,' the artist reported. 'And he came one morning soon after that, and he sat down, and I had the canvas ready, and the brushes and palette, and Carlyle looking on said presently: "And now, man, fire away!" I was taken aback—that wasn't my idea of how work should be done. Carlyle realised it, for he added: "If ye're fighting battles or painting pictures, the only thing to do is to fire away!" One day he told me of Watts and others who had painted his portrait.'<sup>1</sup>

He found Carlyle a delightful person, according to his biographers, and Hugh Cameron, an older 'brother of the

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Whistler*, by J. and E. R. Pennell, II, p. 50 et seq., and see also I, pp. 158-73.

brush', dropped in to see and reported<sup>2</sup>: 'It was the funniest thing I ever saw. There was Carlyle sitting motionless, like a Heathen God or Oriental sage, and Whistler hopping about like a sparrow.'

What afflicted all whom Whistler painted was the number of sittings he wanted. One day Carlyle was going out of the studio when a little girl came in with a doleful face. 'Who's that?' he asked the maid. 'Miss Alexander, giving sittings,' was the answer. 'Poor lassie, poor lassie!' he exclaimed softly, shaking his head, as one who knew what her sufferings must be.

Mrs. Leyland, another sitter, heard Carlyle grumbling a good deal. But that was not to be wondered at; as he said to Allingham<sup>3</sup>: 'Whistler began by asking for two or three sittings, but managed to get a great many. If I make signs of changing my position, he screams in agony,—"For God's sake don't move!" All his anxiety seems to be to get the coat painted to ideal perfection; the face goes for little.'

At last Carlyle rebelled, and Phil Morris obliged by sitting for the coat. Allingham tells that Carlyle called the painter 'the most absurd creature on the face of the earth'—and Whistler told Mr. Mitford that what he said to himself was, 'Sir, you are a very remarkable person',—which was probably only a polite way of saying the same thing.<sup>4</sup>

The young Miss Alexander, who became later Mrs. Spring Rice, had to give Whistler no less than seventy sittings in all—or rather, she called them, 'standings', for she was never allowed to move, and must often have stood for some hours at a time. But the artist remained oblivious alike of her fatigue and of the tears that often finished the day for her. She must have envied Carlyle; but she could never rebel herself as he had done, for she was much too young for that. But no doubt seeing the portrait exhibited side by side with the 'Carlyle' at the Grosvenor Gallery, and meeting and shaking hands with Carlyle himself there, was some sort of compensation.

The 'Carlyle', which now belongs to Glasgow Corporation, has generally been considered Whistler's masterpiece.

<sup>2</sup> To the artist, Robert MacGregor, who told D. A. W.

<sup>3</sup> *William Allingham, A Diary*, pp. 226-7.

<sup>4</sup> *Memories of Lord Redesdale* (Mr. Mitford), I, p. 2.

## XIII

## A NEW NEIGHBOUR REPORTS

(1873)

IN 1873 Mrs. de Morgan, widow of the Mathematical Professor Augustus de Morgan, came to live in Cheyne Row, three doors from Carlyle, and soon became a friend. She gratefully tells of the 'neighbourly kindnesses' she received from him in the years that followed.<sup>1</sup>

She found it pleasant to be introduced to Carlyle again, for he kindly said he was glad to see her, indebted as he was to her husband for a notice of his early mathematical work. She presented him with a copy of the Professor's *Budget of Paradoxes*, which contained the passage referred to,<sup>2</sup> praising Carlyle's essay on Proportion in his translation of Legendre's *Geometry*.

He borrowed her husband's *Formal Logic*, but did not seem to her to appreciate it enough—liked logical reasoning, but did not approve of such forms as 'Barbara, Celarent,' &c., as a help to comprehension. She suggested that the formula was 'more as a help to noting down and expressing what required great accuracy', but he retorted that anyone with 'real clear thought and reasoning power could arrange his arguments without a verbal form as a guide.'

He kept a 'splendid tabby cat, Tib,' which she used to see sitting on his knee or shoulder, and he made friends with her collie, Dido, so that if she saw him in the street she would dash up to greet him, and sometimes alarmed her mistress by jumping up on him so energetically as to make him stagger.

One bright summer day, Mrs. de Morgan accompanied him, his niece, and a friend in a drive in an open carriage across the old Battersea Bridge, and through Wandsworth to Wimbledon. 'In the old streets among the quaint old houses, many of which have since been pulled down,' she relates, 'he showed me many which either had been inhabited by some notoriety or distinguished by some historical association. All along the road, through Chelsea, Putney, and Barnes, these relics presented themselves, and many of them brought out interesting anecdotes. When we

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences* of Mrs. de Morgan, pp. 175-80 and 226-44.

<sup>2</sup> *Budget of Paradoxes*, by Augustus de Morgan, Appendix, p. 499.

reached Wimbledon Common we were discussing Shelley, and, in speaking of a bust, I asked if Mr. Carlyle remembered the form of his head, which was very peculiar. He could not say; "but if phrenology were true, it must have been a very bad one," he added grimly.

Mrs. de Morgan was an enthusiastic believer in the minute measurements of skulls for reading character, and, reproaching his unbelief, pointed out that his own wonderful command of language confirmed the truth of an observation of Gall's, that the seat of the faculty of language was in a part of the brain behind the eye, pushing it forward. Carlyle made some funny remarks on the language of the eyes, then, taking off his velvet cap, cried: 'Come, tell me what I have got in my head!' That was, frankly, a poser, for his thick bushy hair made it impossible to tell anything, or to identify the 'bumps', and the same circumstance renders the beautiful statue on the Embankment useless to Phrenology. Incidentally, Carlyle often expressed to her his dislike of seeing statues of those whom we wish to honour exposed to the rain and smoke in public places, instead of being under cover.

Writing of the now obsolete 'science' to which she was devoted, Mrs. de Morgan describes how she and her friend Lady Byron, the poet's wife, discussed the cranium of his child Ada, in whose bumps they discerned 'very striking indications of great power in many ways'; but one day Lady Byron was compelled to confess to her friend that she had been reading some of her husband's minor poems to the child, and had been surprised and disappointed to find they were little appreciated, while Ada thought the words of a popular song were really quite good! She went on to recall how often she had failed to reconcile the outward appearance of a head with the character of its owner as known to her, and, although as an ardent phrenologist Mrs. de Morgan had her explanations ready, Lady Byron's faith in the science was plainly shaken.

They had together attended the lectures on Heroes in 1840, where Lady Byron made diligent notes, which Carlyle observed; so now, many years afterwards, he told Mrs. de Morgan that 'Hers was a face never to be forgotten'.

One day when Carlyle was talking in his 'searching, sweeping way' of the honesty of publishers and literary men, Mrs. de Morgan mentioned one such whom she knew slightly, and asked if he thought the giving up of a small

income for a scruple of conscience were not a proof of honesty.

'Without doubt,' he replied promptly; 'of honesty up to £200 a year!'

When Morris's *Sigurd*, which is thought to be the best of his translations from the Icelandic, was published, Carlyle read it through, without pause, to the end, and his comment was: 'What a many words that man has!'—which might be praise or blame, according as you take it as plain English or as Scots idiom.

Mrs. de Morgan found 'the gloominess of his views' and his 'vituperative language' the barometer of his state of health. One day, walking with him in a street near home, they met a crowd of boys just released from school, who began shouting and throwing sticks and stones about. A stick struck Carlyle's hat, and there was every likelihood of more serious mischief to follow. Mrs. de Morgan noticed the deep colour in her companion's face, and was surprised when he only said, quietly: 'There, be quiet, can't you, you ne'er-do-weels!' The words had immediate effect in quelling the disturbance, and as they walked on she observed that the Board Schools had a great deal more to do now. He replied as if thinking aloud:

'When I was a lad I was taught to respect my seniors, and made to do my duty, and to walk in God-fearing ways; now all those duties are passed over, and nobody remembers that he owed anything to anybody but himself. It's all selfishness and self-seeking, from the highest to the lowest!'

Mrs. de Morgan ventured to suggest exceptions to this sweeping condemnation, mentioning some 'really practical philanthropists who were devoting their lives to raising the condition of the poor'. But Carlyle was not impressed. If there were any such, he declared, their number must be small, only perhaps one or two here and there whose work was honest, and not undertaken for their own greater glorification. He went on to paint 'a dark picture of the iniquities of trade and commerce, and even in the professions—how it was all grasping and knavery, everyone trying to overreach his neighbour.'

'But,' he finished, 'it will bring its own fruit. There is such a crisis approaching as the country has never known. I have long seen it impending, and I have warned them, but they will take no heed, and the storm will burst when they don't expect it.'

Another time when Cheyne Row resounded with the clamour of boys and girls rushing out from the Board School at Cook's Ground near by, it was Mrs. de Morgan who grumbled, and suggested that the residents should join together to appeal to the managing committee to stop the disturbance, which took place twice a day; but Carlyle would not agree.

'Ah, poor little things,' he said, kindly; 'let them alone—they'll never be so happy again.'

Mrs. de Morgan had been supported through several bereavements by the faith that 'our life here is but the first stage of a long journey', and finding Carlyle extremely sympathetic, she was led to express her belief to him, saying that she was sure all those she had lost were happier than they had been on earth, and waiting for those they had left behind.

'Ah, no,' Carlyle replied, 'despondingly'; 'they are all gone, we know not whither, and there is nothing whatever to give us any intimation as to their state.' Mrs. de Morgan, remembering his 'liturgy of Dead Sea apes' applied to spiritualism and supposed supernatural manifestations, thought it wise not to press a subject upon which he had no desire to dwell.

She noticed, as all his friends did, how acutely he suffered from a nervous susceptibility to noise, and she describes him once rushing out of his house in his morning wrap, 'sending a torrent of words, not descriptive of the state of the blest, over two Italians who were playing an orchestrion opposite. The poor men gave way at once to the general imprecations, asked his pardon, and departed; and I thought were a shilling the better for the transaction. He really suffered from street-noises; but I was walking with him once at Christmas time, when he asked me to wait a minute. This was for the purpose of giving a Christmas-box to the watercress-woman, whose notes are anything but harmony. She is still crying watercresses, but he said it was an old institution then.'

Augustus Hare reports Carlyle as saying to him, in June this year: 'That which the world torments me in most is the awful confusion of noise. It is the Devil's own infernal din all the blessed day long, confounding God's works and his creatures—a truly awful Hell-like combination, and the worst of all is a railway whistle, like the screech of ten thousand cats, and every cat of them all as big as a cathedral.'

'All the neighbours and tradespeople in Chelsea,' Mrs. de Morgan found, 'were naturally proud of the sage who made their little nook of London so famous. The conductors of the omnibuses were very careful not to hurry him in getting in and out, and I once saw him pointed out by one of these to a friend.'

XIV

MASSON'S *MILTON* AND OTHER MATTERS

(1873)

ALLINGHAM continued to have many walks and talks with Carlyle, when all manner of subjects came up for discussion.<sup>1</sup> Once they spoke of Masson's *Life of Milton*, a volume of which Allingham had noticed on Carlyle's table. Carlyle thought Masson's praise of the poet exaggerated—'Milton had a fine gift of poetry—of a particular kind,' he declared. '*Paradise Lost* is absurd; I never could take to it at all,—though now and again clouds of splendour rolled in upon the scene——'

'But *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*—you can find nothing better,' his companion maintained, and quoted:

Over some wide-water'd shore  
Swinging slow with sullen roar.

'That is very good,' Carlyle admitted. 'He did not find that at Horton.'

'At Cambridge, he might,' Allingham suggested.

'No, no!'

'The bell over the levels——'

'It's the sound of the sea.'

'The sound of a bell,' Allingham insisted. 'The curfew.'

'No, no!' Carlyle retorted. 'The sound of the sea,—that is what he is speaking of—'

Swinging slow with sullen roar.'

This opinion is interesting as a sidelight on Carlyle's love of the sea, which is manifest on many occasions.

The last time Tennyson and his son called at Cheyne Row, they found him reading Masson's *Milton*, the six

<sup>1</sup> William Allingham, *A Diary*, pp. 223-8.

volumes of which appeared between the years 1859 and 1880.

'Milton is a grand old fellow,' Tennyson declared.

'Yes, yes,' Carlyle replied, 'and this man Masson is the first man who has properly sorted out the Mosaic cosmogony, and I can now tell which way Satan went; but Masson has hung on his Milton peg *all* the politics, which Milton, poor fellow, had never much to do with except to print a pamphlet or two.'<sup>2</sup>

Carlyle admired Tennyson's *Harold*—'full of wild pathos'; it was founded on the Bayeux Tapestry, which he called 'a very blessed work indeed'. When the poet read him *The Revenge*, 'Eh, Alfred!' he cried, 'you have got the grip of it.'

'There's a man for you,' Tennyson exclaimed. 'The Spaniards declared he would "carouse" three or four glasses of wine and take the glasses between his teeth and crush them to pieces and swallow them down.'

Half to himself, Carlyle commented aloud: 'I knew that Alfred would treat that episode in a masterful manner, and he'd not allude to Elizabeth's starving the poor sailors.'

Of the *May Queen*, he said: 'Oh, but that's tender and true; my niece says it sometimes to me!' Through the reading of *The First Quarrel* he gave little cries of sympathy. 'Ah, but that's a dreary tragic tale.'

'That's a true tale,' Tennyson retorted. 'My doctor in the Isle of Wight told it me.'

'Ech! Poor fellow,' Carlyle went on, referring to the poem: 'he was just an honest plain man, and she was a curious production of the century, and I'm very sorry for that poor girl too.'<sup>3</sup>

When Allingham came to see Carlyle another day, he found him scanning a printed circular, which he pitched into the fire, denouncing company promoters—'damnable fellows deserving to be horsewhipt!'

As they went walking along the Fulham Road, Browning's *Red Cotton Night-Cap Country* was mentioned. Carlyle told the story with all his usual verve and skill—a feat which, Allingham notes, he always liked doing—and commented that there were 'ingenious remarks here and there; but nobody out of Bedlam ever before thought of choosing such a theme.'

<sup>2</sup> *Alfred Lord Tennyson, A Memoir*, by his son, p. 236.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 234-5.



Allingham suggested Browning might next take up the Tichborne Case, and later remarked : ' Browning *will* very likely do the Claimant by and by.'

' And call it what ? ' Carlyle exclaimed. '*Gammon and Spinach* perhaps !'

On another Hyde Park walk, they discussed Russian and Gaelic tales, and the works of John F. Campbell of Islay—*Popular Tales of the West Highlands*—and Macpherson's *Ossian*. Carlyle at this time was giving himself an exhaustive course of reading in English Poetry. A few months later Allingham found him reading Lanfrey, anent whom he exclaimed : ' I am amazed at the character of Napoleon,—it is most devilish ! ' He had on other occasions maintained that Napoleon was not a great general. Circumstances had given him unbounded means, and he had lavished them recklessly, caring not how many soldiers he lost—which was not generalship. Carlyle had, it seems, at one time contemplated writing on Napoleon, but a little investigation convinced him that the subject did not merit it, that here, indeed, was no great hero comparable to Cromwell.

He had been reading ' about Napoleon I, and his now far-off affairs,' he told his brother, explaining : ' It began with Ségur on the Moscow exhibition, a book of considerable talent ; though fettered and hamstrung and distorted by much French epigram, sublime sentiment, etc., etc. ; but representing such a possession by Lucifer himself, of a poor deliriously ambitious and fatally blinded fellow mortal as I never saw before in any record of men.'

Now he was able to say, further, of Lanfrey's *Histoire de Napoleon I* : ' I myself have been . . . merely wandering in mixed mood over Lanfrey, Vol. IV, and certain other Napoleonic matters. Lanfrey's Book is hard and dry, but not without intelligence, brevity and vigour ; and says throughout the very worst that can be said of that wonderful man. . . . In *Lanfrey* Napoleon gradually delineates himself as the nearest approach ever made to Lucifer, otherwise Satan *Salthoun* ; but I found there were grave omissions in that delineation and that the man was actually human after all. Hardly ever man so strangely situated and so strongly tempted in this world before !'

## XV

## DESDEMONA

(1873)

'WELL can I remember,' wrote Sir Theodore Martin, 'Carlyle bursting into my business-room one afternoon and plumping himself down by the fire, and saying in broad Scotch, "Why is it you never came in and had a crack with me, Martin?"'

Martin, twenty years his junior, and the son of an Edinburgh lawyer, following his profession as a parliamentary agent, although a wit and the translator of Goethe, Horace, and others, replied frankly that he refrained from visiting him as he considered he probably had sufficient interruption as it was. 'Surely,' he added, 'it was enough for me to have read *Sartor Resartus* in the old days when it came out in *Fraser*. That was more than I could get any of my friends to do!'

After this, however, they used to see a good deal of each other, and he noted that 'it was curious how gentle Carlyle would become in talking with Lady Martin.'<sup>1</sup>

She was perhaps better known as Helen Faucit, the gifted actress who was Browning's 'Shakespeare-Lady'. She liked to tell how one evening at Froude's, in November, 1873, Carlyle delighted her by warmly praising Macready's Shakespearean revivals, and 'referred in glowing terms' to her interpretation of Desdemona, saying that he 'had never felt the play so deeply before. . . . It quite hurt me to see the fair delicate creature so brutally used.' His tone and accent were 'gentle and tremulous, as if a suffering living creature were there before him.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Credible newspaper interview reprinted in the *Rangoon Gazette*, 16.10.1906.

<sup>2</sup> *Helena Faucit, Lady Martin*, by Sir Theodore Martin, p. 101.

## XVI

## CARLYLE AND LESLIE STEPHEN

(1873)

TALKING with Carlyle on November 7, Allingham mentioned what Leslie Stephen had just written on Jonathan Edwards, to which Carlyle replied: 'What is the use of it?—sticking like a wood-louse to an old bed-post and boring one more hole in it.—There is deep truth in Calvinism.'<sup>1</sup> He meant, of course, what is known in philosophy as determinism, which, as Huxley was showing a dozen years later, is involved in the belief in the law of causation.

When Stephen was out walking with Carlyle and Froude a few days later, it was only to be expected that he should hear something not too flattering about what he had written, and in a letter to Norton he mentioned, 'Carlyle attacked me, not unkindly, for certain remarks about hell. . . . The old prophet loves hell, and assured me on the authority of Dante that it was made of Infinite Love. . . . This is the kind of thing which riles me: but I can never contradict old Thomas, nor indeed speak to him as if I had the honour of belonging in the same rank of created beings. I have an infernal turn for inappropriate modesty.'<sup>2</sup>

The fact was that Stephen, irritated against professional Christians, perhaps because he himself had had to remain one of them against his will, felt bound to reiterate his disbelief in the shibboleths of the trade; and was now making attacks—the word is his own<sup>3</sup>—on Dean Stanley, and poor old F. D. Maurice, who was 'muddleheaded.' Both of these men were friends of Carlyle, who in any case never countenanced personalities of that kind, so that his sharpness with Stephen was not to be wondered at.

His attitude to hell was probably that of Burns:

The fear of hell's the hangman's whip  
To keep the rogues in order.

It had no doubt a salutary effect upon true believers, whom the public scoffing at the grand old mediaeval institution might readily demoralise.

Stephen's health had been restored by two months in the

<sup>1</sup> *William Allingham, A Diary*, p. 228.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters of C. E. Norton*, II, p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> F. W. Maitland's *Leslie Stephen*, pp. 231, &c.

Alps, so that he had come back 'ready to pitch into the Christian religion at a moment's notice'. After the work on Jonathan Edwards came his *Free-thinking and Plain-speaking*, in the last week of November, and the following month he wrote about it to Norton—the press had condemned the book violently. 'I did not send a copy to Carlyle,' he added. 'I regret very much my position towards the old prophet, but I cannot help it. Whenever I see him it is the old story. I like him; indeed, I might say, I feel a really strong affection for him; but he always rails at me, more or less directly, and makes me feel so uncomfortable that I retire into myself and become dogged and speechless. I think that he dislikes me; and one cannot contradict him or argue with him. Therefore, though I go as a duty to see him at intervals, I cannot say that it is a pleasure on the whole. It is a pity, and if I were less plagued with the English vice of shyness, I would try to break the ice.'

Carlyle gave him the feeling that he considered him a 'hot-headed, misguided and irreverent person'.

Had he mastered his shyness and broken the ice, his relations with Carlyle would have become, perhaps, of much more value to him. It seems to have been diffidence mainly that prevented him from feeling sure that what Carlyle really disliked was the habit of scoffing at and attacking Christianity, which might do serious harm to simple-minded persons incapable of thinking for themselves and existing comfortably without their old faith. To men of sense these attacks were unnecessary; for them ancient creeds had already subsided into the mere superstitions of the past, of historical interest only; the true believer could only be given pain. Therefore no useful purpose was served, while actual harm might accrue.

## XVII

### FURTHER MUSINGS

(1873)

**O**CCASIONALLY Miss Anne Thackeray, a woman of thirty-six now, and distinguished in letters, might have been seen this winter walking with Carlyle, splash-

splashing through the rain once; but the only item she left on record—November 28—was something probably elicited by a despondent remark of her own, and intended to cheer her.<sup>1</sup>

She repeated what Browning had said to her: 'Everybody knows what they ought to do. It's all nonsense about asking advice. . . . I can see that all is right for me—I can't answer for anybody else.' She sought some pocket-theory, some hard-and-fast, absolute interpretation of life, to fill the vacancy felt by any normal intelligent woman not occupied by family duties.

Carlyle's reply was in keeping with all his utterances on such a subject: 'A cheesemite might as well attempt to understand a cow and the great universe of grass beyond it, as we human mites might expect to understand our making and our Maker's secrets.'

In his Journal shortly after, he was musing again on the inscrutable facts, and his own relation to them.

'Day before yesterday was my poor birthday, attended with some ceremonial greetings and more or less sincere expressions of regard. Welcome these latter, though unimportant. To myself the serious and solemn fact, "Thy seventy-eighth year is finished, then." Nor had that in it an impressiveness of too much depth; perhaps rather too little. A life without work in it, as mine now is, has less and less worth to me; nay, sometimes a feeling of disgrace and blame is in me; the poor soul still vividly enough alive, but struggling in vain under the strong imprisonment of the dying or half-dead body. For many months past, except for idle *reading*, I am pitifully idle. Shame, shame! I say to myself, but cannot help it. Great and strange glimpses of thought come to me at intervals, but to prosecute and fix them down is denied me. Weak, too weak, the flesh, though the spirit is willing.'

The shaking of his right hand had come upon him 'as a sentence not to do any more work', dictation being manifestly unsatisfactory. 'A man must stick to his post,' he declared, 'and do his best there as long as he can work. When his tools are taken from him, it is a sign that he may retire.'

<sup>1</sup> *Letters of Anne Thackeray Ritchie*, by her daughter, p. 152.

## XVIII

## ON HERRINGS

(1873)

IN the *Fors Clavigera* Letter for December, No. XXXVIII, Ruskin alludes to a talk the day before he wrote with Carlyle, who spoke of the herrings, 'the shoals of them like shining continents', which were not allowed to be furnished cheap to the poor by the middlemen dominating the London market. No doubt he was putting into his own language what he heard from Carlyle when he continued by quoting the old law of Florence which forbade anyone from buying fish to sell it again, and proceeded to show 'not only the possibility of regulating prices, but the fact that they are now regulated, and regulated by rascals, while all the world is bleating out its folly about Supply and Demand.'

It is unlikely that Carlyle would have spoiled the economic argument by the use of the epithet, for the middlemen were no more rascals than Ruskin's own father, a middleman in liquor; but the 'do-nothing gospel' was all the more absurd because it made honest middlemen destroy good food; which clenched the case for interference on behalf of the public. But the problem still remains unsolved, and vast quantities of good fish are still regularly dumped back into the sea—dead—for want of a market, and fish still retails at prices ranging from a hundred to several thousand per centum more than the fishermen are paid for them; so that it would seem that the world takes a long time to learn the simplest lessons.

## XIX

## LECKY BECOMES A COMPANION

(1873)

THIS year, Lecky and his wife had taken up house in Onslow Gardens, near Cheyne Row. Carlyle was little seen in society, disliked being lionised and abominated most dinner parties, but he liked to be visited by friends; and what Mrs. Lecky tells may be spread over the next eight

years.<sup>1</sup> She gratefully recalled that he had from the first been very friendly towards her husband, wishing to see him often, and had given her a warm welcome and shown her unfailing kindness.

‘He was,’ she declared, ‘the kindest and most gracious of hosts, always insisting as long as he was able on taking his lady visitors to the door; and if one had not called for some time he used to say in a gentle reproachful way, “You have become quite a stranger here.” This aspect of Carlyle is so little known, and a certain impatience in his irritable moods has become so much emphasised, that it is well to recall the other side of his character.’

Her husband admired him as a genius and a moral force, but could never be called a disciple of his, although they became the best of friends, and a weekly walk or drive became regular habit. Once, indeed, there was a slight coolness. Carlyle, aware of his companion’s views, nevertheless allowed himself to inveigh ‘in his emphatic monologue fashion’ against Ireland and the Irish; in consequence, Lecky remained away from Cheyne Row longer than usual, but Carlyle, who soon realised what was wrong, showed himself so much concerned that Lecky resumed his visits.

In extreme old age, Carlyle used to say that when he was out with Lecky, walking or driving, he was as well taken care of as if he had been a young lady.

In one of his Commonplace Books, Lecky made some notes of his many talks with Carlyle, which merit repetition:

‘His conversation was most beautiful, singular and impressive. Mr. Venables and Mr. Brookfield, who knew well the best literary society of London for some forty years, said that it was in their time wholly unrivalled. One of its charms (which I have not seen noticed) was a singularly musical voice, a voice peculiarly fitted for pathos, and this (to me, at least) quite took away anything grotesque in the very strong Scotch accent. It also gave a softness and a charm which is wanting in his writings. The *Latter-Day Pamphlets* seem to me to represent better than anything else his conversation. I have heard great parts of the *Shooting Niagara* from him before it was published.’

What Carlyle said ‘was never commonplace. The whole diction was always original and intensely vivid, and it was more saturated and interlaced with metaphor than any other conversation I have ever heard. It was peculiarly

<sup>1</sup> *Memoir of W. E. H. Lecky*, by his wife, pp. 92-4.

difficult to report, for it was not epigrammatic but continuous, and very much of the charm lay in the extraordinary felicities of his expressions, in the vividness of his epithets, in his unrivalled power of etching out a subject by a few words so as to make it stand out in prominent relief. He was the very greatest of word-painters. It was always "the vision which the prophet Isaiah *saw*." What Johnson said of Burke, that no man could talk with him for five minutes under a porch without perceiving that he was a great man, was most literally true of Carlyle. The intense individuality of his expressions, his thoughts, his imagination, was always apparent, and his talking was never more wonderful than when walking alone with one companion, for whom he certainly made no effort of display, whom indeed he seemed sometimes almost to forget. His conversation was mainly monologue and soliloquy. Not slow enough to be wearisome or to give any sense of effort, yet so fully and perfectly articulated that every sentence seemed to tell, it streamed on by the hour in a clear, low voice, glittering with metaphor and picturesque epithets and turns of phrases of the truest eloquence.'

Lecky noted also 'a wonderful quickness and dexterity of argumentative repartee, seizing in an instant a weak or unguarded point, and his language seemed to kindle as it flowed. Never was such a master of invective, welling and surging up in an irresistible geyser at opposition.

'He was also the most pathetic of talkers—indeed, the only talker I have ever heard who was really pathetic. Pictures of his early life, or of the sorrows of those he had known, or scenes from history, were related in a tone and with a manner that drew tears to the eye. On religious matters his language had a sublimity and an air of inspiration which always reminded me (and many others) of what a Hebrew prophet must have been; and sometimes when very earnest he had a strangely solemn way of turning and looking full in the hearer's face for a second before speaking, which added extraordinarily to the impressiveness of what he said. I have never seen this in anyone else, and it always reminded me of Luke xx. 17—

And when they heard it, they said, "God forbid."  
But he looked upon them and said . . .'

Lecky noted also that his memory and learning were profound, although there were lamentable gaps—the chief of which



perhaps was in theology, a subject to which the historian of Rationalism naturally attached much importance, but which Carlyle had regarded almost since boyhood as defunct.

In a lecture on Carlyle which he delivered many years after, he stressed the fact that the chief part of Carlyle's teaching is 'the supreme sanctity of work. "All true work," he said, "is religion; and the essence of every sound religion is, 'Know thy work and do it.'"

'He had no sympathy with the prevailing political ideas. He believed men profoundly unequal; that it was the first interest of society that the wisest men should be selected as its leaders.' The current method of picking the wisest, by a counting of blockheads, he had of course always denounced. 'No British man,' Lecky quotes him, 'can attain to be a statesman or chief of workers till he has first proved himself to be a chief of talkers.'

He went on to summarise Carlyle's teaching and life, showing how to the end he set the example as well as gave the precept—no work ever scamped, no minutest detail left unsifted. Lecky excuses those who were scandalised by Carlyle's ridiculing of prison reform, but explains that his attitude was due to the fact that the convicted criminal was often better treated than the honest artisan. 'He maintained, too, that a strain of sentiment about criminals prevalent in his day'—and in ours—'tended to diminish the difference between right and wrong. He hated with an intense hatred that whole system of philosophy which denied that there was a deep, essential, fundamental difference between right and wrong, and turned the whole matter into a mere calculation of interests. He was accustomed to say that one of the chief merits of Christianity was that it taught that right and wrong were as far apart as Heaven and Hell, and that no greater calamity can befall a nation than a weakening of the righteous hatred of evil.'

It seems that Carlyle had set Lecky right, as he intended to do, on the question of the part of his teaching that Lecky had once misinterpreted; for he goes on: 'He was often accused of teaching that might is right. He always answered that he had not done so—that what he taught was that right is might; that by the providential constitution of the Universe truth in the long run is sure to be stronger than falsehood; that good will prevail over evil, and right and might prove to be identical.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See *Contemporary Review*, October, 1891, pp. 521-8.

Walking out together, Carlyle and Lecky once found their way to Highgate, and were strolling, as Lecky thought, aimlessly, when Carlyle suddenly remarked : ' What brought me here to-day was a desire to see Coleridge's house once more. In old times I went there to see him on several occasions, but I can't remember the house.'<sup>3</sup>

' Can you remember the street ? ' Lecky asked.

' I don't think it was in a street,' Carlyle replied, shaking his head, ' but I feel sure it was somewhere in this neighbourhood. Let us ask somebody.'

To Lecky, knowing how rapidly houses in suburban London change hands, the idea of enquiring for a house where someone had lived thirty years before seemed rather ludicrous, but Carlyle persisted, in spite of his friend's amusement. ' It can do no harm to ask,' he pointed out.

Presently he indicated a very old lady who was coming slowly towards them.

' Look,' he cried. ' She must be able to remember thirty years ago, and I daresay has lived here longer than that. I shall put my question to her ; and, mark you, she will answer it to our satisfaction.'

He accordingly accosted the old lady, took off his hat, and with the greatest politeness said : ' Can you be so good as to inform me, madam, which house hereabouts was once inhabited by the poet Coleridge ? '

A look of pleasure spread over the old lady's face, and she answered readily, ' Certainly I can, sir. I can point out the very house to you. There it is.' She turned and indicated it with the stick upon which she had been leaning. ' It belonged to my brother, and Coleridge was his tenant. I am a sister of Dr. Gilman.'

The good Lecky was ' never more astonished in his life.'

## XX

### STATUE OF JOHN KNOX

(1873)

PROVOST BROOK of Haddington used to say that the Knox Memorial Institute there was first suggested to him by a talk with Carlyle, who explained to him, on a

<sup>3</sup> *Memories of Victorian London*, by E. B. Walford, pp. 187-8.

visit to Haddington, which may have been in 1873, the reasons why there should be such a thing at the birthplace of the great Reformer.

Carlyle had been interested in the idea of commemorating in some suitable and lasting form the man whom he regarded as one of Scotland's greatest figures, and had naturally turned to Laing, whose *Life of Knox* he had read, as it appeared, with very great pleasure. Considerable correspondence ensued, leading to a controversy that produced his last public utterance in the magazine press.

On December 10, he wrote stating at length his considered opinion on the project: 'It has always been evident to me that there could be no cause of failure in the enterprise of a Monument to Knox, but the want of a rational proposal of what is to be set up in honour of him. Fix upon something that would represent in any way moderately true, modest and feasible the real relation of Scotland at this time to John Knox, now three centuries distant from us, and I have not the least doubt but all Scotland would respond with alacrity, ready to accept and help, and that *money* in particular, to any fit amount from Scotsmen here and in all parts of the world, would come in. With a foolish, untrue or impracticable plan; still more, as we have seen, with no definite plan at all, it has naturally been different. In the case of Knox,—the figure of whose existence both outward and spiritual has grown so dim to us, and in whom all of us know mainly, that there was no compatibility with lies; and that to him of all men, anything of falsity, bombast, or (half-involuntary) *hypocrisy* in short would be the most unsuitable,—the question what to propose is unusually difficult. Truth, distinctness, simplicity, these are the qualities that would be most available in the answer given.

'Like yourself I am clear for a statue as the thing to be tried for at this stage of the business. If there is any actual likeness of the person of Knox procurable and ascertainable, the very dictate of Nature herself is for a bronze or marble statue, faithfully modelled from the same. The first question therefore is, Does there such a likeness of Knox exist? My own poor notion is, as you know, that there does: in that traditional portrait at Torphichen, an excellent engraving of which has been many years beside me. In no other portrait . . . is there the least of a physiognomy that I can believe to be Knox's. . . . You

have warned me more than once that this Torphichen Portrait has externally nothing for it but traditionary evidence ; and I think you said even this had never been investigated to the bottom. Such investigation with the aid of wise artists, sculptors, etc., ought to be now gone into ; and I do trust that the evidence for it (constant tradition, namely) is as good as what there is for any other Portrait. Physiognomic evidence has long appeared to me to be complete ; every lineament is Scotch, and expresses in my opinion with singular completeness the wiry vigour, the perfect veracity, the loving earnestness, modesty and yet long-suffering contempt which dwelt in the grand soul of Knox. An excellent statue might be modelled from it ; the Geneva Gown would be drapery to the ankles. . . . In short, I could expect from a well-chosen Sculptor, preceded by rigorous enquiry all round, an altogether venerable, interesting, and even credible statue . . . in bronze, in a simple preaching attitude . . . with the venerable head bare, and almost no gesticulation ; only attitude and face denoting what depths of earnestness there is.'

For site for the statue, he suggested the centre of the College Square, with a pedestal of Scotch whinstone, ' far away from the sorry populace of statues, which Edinburgh too much swarms with already. There in the centre of its University it might seem to speak what in truth will be for ever profitable to all Scotchmen ; and Scotland might seem to answer, through many generations, " Yes, the newest spiritualism of Scotland still reverently recognises in you its spiritual father (changing only in the *garment* of your intellect but in the essence of it clear and eternal) ; and for certain one of the noblest sons Scotland ever bred, and at this hour her benefactor beyond all others that could be named.' "

He went on to ask about the old house in which Knox lived at the head of the Canongate, which he considered should be a national, or at any rate municipal, possession in which old editions of Knox's books, and other relics and museum pieces connected with him, could be housed.

Laing replied, saying that he was proceeding with the affair, and thereafter Carlyle plunged into what was obviously the first essential preliminary—the discovery of an authentic portrait on which the statue could be based. Everything he found confirmed his faith in the Torphichen portrait, of which there was a copy in the possession of Lord Somerville.

He showed the engraving he had to various people who might be able to pronounce upon it, including a painter of eminence who could not venture an opinion upon its historical aspect, but could and did approve it as a credible piece of portraiture.

Laing, however, did not share his conviction, and adhered to his original belief in the woodcut of Beza in 1580, and the engraving of Hondius in Verberden (1602), as the 'standards to judge of his likeness'. He further favoured a 'monument in the north aisle' which Carlyle could only regard as a 'fractional' contribution. As he wrote to Doctor John, on January 1, 1874: 'In fact, I have considerably set my heart on seeing a real monument set up to Knox, as probably the last thing I shall meddle with in this world; and I won't yet give it up, though Laing has failed.'

As the divergence of opinion became more definite, he was tempted to drop the whole matter, anxious to avoid 'a tide of troubles' and fearing that he might find himself thrust into the position of leader of the movement, which was the last thing he desired.

However, he persisted with his researches, and now learned that the Somerville portrait was not in effect a copy of the Torphichen, but a quite independent work, and further investigation went to show that it was indeed much superior, and far more likely to be authentic, than the one upon which he had first pinned his faith. It was in Ireland, in the possession of the sister of the last Somerville, who had died two years before, and she very generously offered not merely to answer a series of questions upon it by Tait, but to bring it to London herself so that Carlyle could have it examined properly. He also obtained the Torphichen portrait, and both were investigated thoroughly by experts. The result was simply to confirm his belief in the Somerville, and he decided upon publishing his conclusions. He recorded his researches into the various portraits that at different times have been held to be likenesses of Knox, summed up the evidence, and gave his reasons for finding definitely in favour of the Somerville.

Laing was not at all convinced. His long and close study of Knox and everything connected with Knox were sufficient to convince him of the impregnability of his own position, which he persisted in maintaining. Carlyle was vexed at such insistence, but amused as well, and could see the humorous side of it—two old men in danger of

losing sight of the original object of their investigations and differences, and quarrelling over a matter that was not, and could not be, susceptible of absolute proof. The diversion of opinion could not, of course, detract in any way from Carlyle's high estimate of the value of the historian's work on Knox, and the two old friends, when they met, on Laing's visit to London in August, 1874, and in Edinburgh in the same month, found themselves 'all in the old humour again'.

## XXI

AUGUSTUS HARE CALLS WITH LADY  
ASHBURTON

(1874)

AT the beginning of the New Year, 1874, Augustus J. C. Hare went with Lady Ashburton to call at Cheyne Row.

'It was most interesting,' he reports.<sup>1</sup> 'The quaint, simple, old-fashioned brick house; the faded furniture; the workbox and other articles of the long dead wife, always left untouched; the living niece, and the great man himself in a long grey garment, half coat, half dressing-gown, which buttoned to the throat and fell in straight folds to the feet or below them, like one of the figures in Noah's Ark.'

Carlyle talked of Holman Hunt's picture of the Home at Nazareth, which he called 'the most unnatural thing that ever was painted, and the most unnatural thing in it the idea that the virgin should be keeping her "preciosities" in the carpenter's shop.'

He spoke also 'of Landor, of the grandeur and unworldliness of his nature, and of how it was a lasting disgrace to England that the vile calumnies of an insolent slanderer had been suffered to blight him in the eyes of so many, and to send him out an exile from England in his old age.'

Probably in answer to Lady Ashburton's affectionate enquiries, Carlyle complained about his state of health, and with the inevitable touch of humour declared he could

<sup>1</sup> *The Story of My Life*, by A. J. C. Hare, IV, pp. 154-5.

wish the Devil nothing worse than to have his stomach to digest with through all eternity.

They went out walking, with Carlyle between his visitors, wearing 'an extraordinary tall broad-brimmed felt hat, which gave him the air of an old magician.' The reporter 'saw the cab-drivers pointing and laughing at the extraordinary figure, and indeed it was no wonder'; but it would have upset his equanimity somewhat had he been told, what was probably the case, that the cab-drivers were quite used to this extraordinary figure, and accustomed to be respectful towards it, whereas in unfashionable Chelsea of those days the sight of the dandy Augustus Hare was much more likely to tickle them.

Chelsea, cab-drivers and all, was proud of its grand old man, whose kindness and unfailing generosity had been so great a boon to many of the less fortunate residents of the district.

## XXII

## CAPITAL AND LABOUR

(1874)

WHEN Sir Joseph Whitworth, an inventor of genius, who had been acquainted with Carlyle since 1847, when he had shown him through his works in Manchester,<sup>1</sup> announced his intention of supplementing the savings of his workpeople by a bonus, he was delighted to receive a letter from Carlyle, which was read at a meeting of the Stourbridge School of Art, and printed in *The Times* on January 28, 1874<sup>2</sup>:

'I have heard of your offer on behalf of the thrifty workpeople of Darley, and of the thankful acceptance of it by the district authorities of the place. I cannot resist the highly unwonted desire that has arisen in me to say that I highly approve and applaud the ideas you have on that subject, and to declare in words that, in my opinion, nothing wiser, more beneficent, or worthy of your distin-

<sup>1</sup> *Carlyle on Cromwell and Others*, p. 394.

<sup>2</sup> *Works of John Ruskin*, ed. Cook and Wedderburn, V, 28, p. 142, and V, 27, pp. xlv, xlv; and *The Treasury of Modern Biography*, by Robert Cochrane, p. 294.

guished place as a master of workers, has come before me for many a year. Would to Heaven that all or many of the captains of industry in England had a soul in them such as yours, and could do as you have done, or could still further co-operate with you in works and plans to like effect! The look of England to me is at this moment abundantly ominous, the question of capital and labour growing every year more anarchical, insoluble by the notions hitherto applied to it, pretty certain to issue in Petroleum one day, unless some other gospel than that of the Dismal Science come to illuminate it. Two things are pretty sure to me. The first is that capital and labour never can or will agree together till they both first of all decide on doing their work faithfully throughout, and like men of conscience and honour, whose highest aim is to behave like faithful citizens of this universe, and obey the eternal commandment of Almighty God who made them. The second thing is, that a sadder object than even that of the coal strike, or any other conceivable strike, is the fact that, loosely speaking, we may say all England has decided that the profitablest way is to do its work ill, slimly, swiftly, and mendaciously. What a contrast between now and say only a hundred years ago! At that latter date, or still more conspicuously for ages before it, all England awoke to its work with an invocation to the Eternal Maker to bless them in their day's labour and help them to do it well. Now, all England, shopkeepers, workmen, all manner of competing labourers, awaken as with an unspoken but heartfelt prayer to Beelzebub, "Oh, help us, thou great Lord of shoddy, adulteration, and malfeasance, to do our work with the *maximum* of slimness, swiftness, profit, and mendacity, for the Devil's sake. Amen."

According to Ruskin's editors, Cook and Wedderburn, this letter 'serves as a summary of those which Ruskin addressed "to the workmen and labourers of Great Britain"'—*Fors Clavigera*, the background of which is Ruskin's 'scheme of social economy expounded in *Unto This Last* and *Munera Pulveris*.'



## XXIII

## THE ORDER OF MERIT

(1874)

ON February 12, Carlyle received an unexpected token of appreciation from Germany, in acknowledgment of his services to that country, and he wrote two days later to Doctor John :

‘ His Prussian Excellency forwarded to me by registered parcel all the Documents connected with our sublime elevation to the Prussian Order of Merit. I had a great deal of unwelcome bother reading that accursed *Cursivschrift* of theirs and making out what gasp of official twaddle I was expected to answer with ; but that too is all done ; goes off to Berlin by this evening’s post. The papers, all but one,—which enclosed a series of strict enquiries, all in *Cursivschrift*, as to my name, surname, place of birth, religion, social standing (a “ Writer of Books ”), place of abode, and connection with other Prussian honours,—have now gone back with clear answers affixed : and so we have done, thank Heaven, with this sublime nonentity for ever and a day. The Star of symbolical Decoration is really very pretty ; a bright gold thing like a wheel with spokes, about the size of a crown piece, hung with a black ribbon, with silver edges. Mary has laid it by, punctually folded up, probably never more to meet the light in my time. But in sum, I am heartily glad I have got rid of the affair ; and feel about it, after the fash is over, quite as emphatically as I did at first, that had they sent me a  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. of good Tobacco the addition to my happiness had probably been suitabler and greater ! ’

The intention to honour him was sincere enough ; it was well known that the Order of Merit was never lightly awarded, and that it definitely implied its title. But Carlyle never overcame his dislike and contempt for attentions of this kind, and would only accept them when he could do so without being saddled by any perpetual reminder of them such as a university doctorate or a British title would have forced upon him.

## XXIV

## FROUDE'S BEREAVEMENT AND WORK

(1874)

IN February, Froude's wife died suddenly—'the greatest sorrow of his life,' as his biographer, Herbert Paul, says. 'It had been a perfect marriage.'<sup>1</sup> At first the only people whom he could bear to see were Carlyle and FitzJames Stephen. Just two days after the event, Carlyle met him in the street, and found him stoically composed—burying his grief in the engrossing work upon which he was engaged, the completion of his *Irish History*.

That work, indeed, seems to have been something of a disappointment to Carlyle. He never mentioned it to Allingham, whom he had so often urged to tackle the subject himself, and in a letter to Froude he described it as 'sharp, smiting and decisive' but lacking much a 'carefully weighed' conclusion. To Gavan Duffy, when he saw him, he seemed to be 'fond of quoting Froude to hear what I had to say'.

He seldom, indeed, had unqualified praise for any of Froude's work, and was frank in his criticism of it, although naturally franker still when expressing himself to his brother and others; which may have had, all unconsciously, a certain influence on Froude's mind afterwards. But his feeling for him in his bereavement was unqualified and deep. On February 14, he sent this 'black article of news' to the Doctor—'the saddest to myself that has befallen for years.'—'Poor Froude, whose kindness to me during this cold was extreme and continual, has, on a sudden, almost without warning at all, lost his loving and excellent Wife; no doubt the saddest calamity that could have overwhelmed him. For several weeks past, it now appears Mrs. Froude was confined with "a kind of Bronchitis", but neither herself nor any of those about her made the least stir about it; all confidently calculating that to stay in the house was all there needed in the matter. Froude hardly mentioned it to me in his almost daily visits; and seemed cheery and happy beyond wont, just about finishing his *Book on Ireland*. . . . Thursday night at 8 o'clock she died; all on a sudden;—and has left poor Froude, I dare

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Froude*, by Herbert Paul, p. 250, and pp. 242-3.

well believe, drowned in such black deluges of woe as no other man in London. I am going now to see whether he can admit me for a moment, but I think probably not.'

Later he mentioned him again: 'Poor fellow, he says little about his immense calamity, but if you meet him alone anywhere his look is that of one sunk in boundless grief. He resists by work, which indeed is the only human method.'

Talking to Allingham one day some time later, as they walked towards Piccadilly, he said, 'Froude's *History of England* is too long, ought to be melted down to a third part. Froude is hardly just to Elizabeth, has brought up all her foibles. His treatment of Mary is harsh. The sneer at her faded charms in the execution scene gave me a shudder.'<sup>2</sup>

## XXV

LESLIE STEPHEN AND R. L. S.

(1874)

'I HAD a walk with the immortal Thomas a day or two ago,' wrote Leslie Stephen to Norton at the end of March.<sup>1</sup> 'He has been ill, but is better, and expressed a strong desire to stand over Darwin with a whip.' In a previous letter, Stephen had expressed himself well content with his own *Free-Thinking and Plain Speaking*, saying, 'Meanwhile, the religious press have written various reviews of me, which are really amusing in one way. They are all so much pleased with my attacks on Stanley that they forgive what they call my want of spirituality. One is half ashamed of such sympathy.' Probably what Stephen had to forgive in Carlyle was a censure of these attacks on his old friend the Dean, more plain-spoken than pleasant.

They agreed better about Tennyson.<sup>2</sup> When Stephen thought the poet too timid in expressing doubts, Carlyle did not differ. Occasionally he quoted and praised with enthusiasm the *Ulysses*, as a contrast to Tennyson's later productions so tender to the 'happy views' of secluded ladies, and once he remarked: 'The old poem has the

<sup>2</sup> *William Allingham, A Diary*, p. 235.

<sup>1</sup> *Life and Letters of Leslie Stephen*, by F. W. Maitland, pp. 239-40.

<sup>2</sup> *Studies of a Biographer*, by Leslie Stephen, II, pp. 235-8.

true heroic ring. Tennyson has declined into a comparatively sentimental and effeminate line of writing, mere æstheticisms, instead of inspiring a courageous spirit to confront the spiritual crisis. The *Idylls of the King* could not be the epic of the future, but at best a melodious version of conventional and superficial solutions of the last problem. King Arthur has too much of the "Gigman" (snob) to be a great leader of modern men.'

An Australian globe-trotter was in London this May, with a letter of introduction to Stephen,<sup>3</sup> and 'very anxious to see Carlyle'. So he was sent to Allingham, who introduced him as Stephen's friend. A little later Stephen had a call from a contributor to his magazine, 'who had been working at Knox' and was eager to 'talk to Carlyle about him'. This was the twenty-four-year-old Robert Louis Stevenson, still uncertain about his career, averse to law and engineering, and dabbling in history. The case of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* which made him famous was not heard of until 1886. Meanwhile the sagacious Stephen perceived already his literary promise, and was writing to Norton:

'I thought the old man would like to see this young Scotch zealot, and the same afternoon I met Carlyle walking with Froude. He instantly began to blow me up about my Australian.' Apparently the interview had not been a success, the globe-trotter a bore, and Carlyle indignant accordingly. Unluckily, Stephen was foolish enough to take this opportunity of mentioning the young Scot, with the result that he should have foreseen. The 'revered Thomas' gave him 'a bit of his mind', demanded to be told why people insisted on wanting to see his 'wretched old carcase', and so on, and without being in the least rude to Stephen gave him the impression that he was angry with his 'presumption in acting the part of showman.'

It was a most unfortunate contretemps in many ways. Young Stevenson was disappointed—and we are deprived of what would certainly have been an interesting pen-portrait, for he would assuredly have left some record of a meeting with the Sage. But more particularly, the over-sensitive Stephen imagined himself censured, and, without taking offence, concluded that Carlyle did not like him, and would rather he stayed away.

'I can't bear the thought of intruding upon the old man, if he does not want me,' he wrote to Norton. 'He would

<sup>3</sup> *Life and Letters of Leslie Stephen*, by F. W. Maitland, pp. 248-9.

submit to it civilly, but would wish me somewhere else. Consequently I have not called since. If he thinks about it at all, he thinks that he is well rid of a flippant scoffer. I mean to go once more to show that I am not offended, but I don't mean to go on seeing a man whom I admire and respect as much as ever, but who would—I feel sure—rather have my room than my company.'

Norton was quite as distressed as Stephen about this break, and was inclined to suspect that Froude had had some hand in it; but Stephen's own modesty and shyness were the root of the trouble and unfortunately there were no means of overcoming such a disability.

## XXVI

## THE ADVOCATES' LIBRARY

(1874)

IT is one of the curiosities of Scottish History that one of the worst men who figures in it, the notorious Lord Advocate 'Bloody MacKenzie', the Bishop's Drudge of the Killing Times in the sixteen-eighties, had done a little good, out of which came a great good, in his later years, in helping to found the Advocates' Library. That was in 1689, when defeat had come upon him and death was at hand. Perhaps it was meant as a 'work of merit', as the Buddhists would say, an off-set to the evil-doing of his professional life. Judas Iscariot may have given alms occasionally, and been a good man in his own way, as good as MacKenzie; for it must be borne in mind that to the Lord Advocate, as much as to Graham of Claverhouse, the order of an official superior was always sufficient justification for any brutality, superseding conscience and every other human law.

However, contrary to common belief, the good that men do lives after them, the evil is oft interred with their bones; so the Advocates' Library flourished and became a blessing to all Scotland. By 1850 its collection had been enormously augmented through the operation of the Copyright Acts, and it was manifest that the resources of the Faculty of Advocates were no longer adequate for its maintenance, or for continuing the policy of making the collection accessible to all scholars. In 1864, in 1869, and again in 1873, efforts

were made to enlist public support on its behalf, which, however, met with no success. Carlyle, characteristically, embraced the cause, and conclusively set forth its claims to national recognition and support in a letter of April 3, 1874, to Mr. Robert Horn, then Dean of Faculty :

'I can with great readiness, as in gratitude and mere love of truth I am bound to do, give my clear testimony as to the public uses of the Advocates' Library. I found it my one resource for serious reading while first attempting literature in Scotland ; and still remember with thankful pleasure the free access and useful help afforded me there, while my claims on it, if any, were all in a prospective or incipient state. I was at once courteously admitted, I forget on what member's introduction, probably on the late Sir William Hamilton's. I had free admittance at all times afterwards, and the best accommodation for silent study ; and such helps, bibliographical and others—as I have never met elsewhere, and found the Library by very far the best I had ever been in ; and, indeed, putting all qualities together, one of the best I have ever since become acquainted with. It is incomparably the best of all the libraries we have in Scotland, and in fact the only Library worth calling such, to which literary aspirants and known literary people, except connected with colleges, have any practical admittance, an Institution which may to Scotland, in that respect, be called invaluable. My clear testimony therefore is, that essentially it belongs to Scotland at large—such the liberal practice of the Honourable Faculty whose property it specially is—and that it fairly deserves all reasonable help and support from whatever calls itself a Government in that country.'

Negotiations with Government were resumed in 1912, but the War intervened, and it was not until 1923 that the immediate financial difficulties were solved by the gift of £100,000 from Sir Alexander Grant. Two years later, in August, 1925, the National Library of Scotland Act was passed, and the old Advocates' Library of the Bloody MacKenzie became the National Library of Scotland, only the purely legal section of its wide and valuable collections being retained by the Faculty as a separate private library for members of the Scottish Bar.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See "The Advocates' Library", by the late Librarian, W. K. Dickson, LL.D., in the *Library Association Record* for September, 1927, pp. 175-6.

## XXVII

## WOOLNER'S CAPTAIN COOK

(1874)

IN June this year, the Hon. Henry (afterwards Sir Henry) Parkes, Premier of New South Wales, who had met Woolner in Australia in 1854, wrote to Carlyle enclosing a letter to the sculptor asking if he would undertake a statue of Captain Cook for Sydney.

Carlyle wrote that Parkes 'only seems to fear you may not be able to undertake the Captain Cook for £2,000; in which sad case he asks me to "advise" who should be next applied to. I think it would be an excellent subject and well worthy of you, if you found the money offer sufficient.

'In any case please communicate with Parkes as soon as possible, and let me know what you have decided on.

'It is a long time since I have seen you and I myself, as is natural, go out less and less; but I hear always from time to time that everything is going well with you in your art and otherwise. Best success to you, now and ever.'

Woolner, as it happened, had spent some months in Sydney, and knew the site where the proposed statue was to be erected. He had always entertained a great admiration for the discoverer, and accordingly felt the keenest inclination to undertake the commission. After some further correspondence he did so, and the result was his biggest work, one of his best; and Sydney rejoiced and made holiday when the statue was unveiled.<sup>1</sup>

## XXVIII

## GERALD BLUNT SELLS AUTOGRAPHS

(1874)

IN June, Gerald Blunt applied to Carlyle for 'a contribution of autographs' for sale at a big bazaar to be held in the Rectory Gardens.

'A barrow-load, if you like,' Carlyle at once replied, and

<sup>1</sup> *Thomas Woolner, R.A.*, by Amy Woolner, pp. 280 and 295-8.

good-humouredly gave several dozens, 'which of course sold well, and added considerably to the total of receipts.'<sup>1</sup>

Characteristically, each signature was appended to some quotation worth remembering, a verse or two or a sentence, doubtless written by a younger hand. The shaky signatures he thereafter appended must have been among the last he ever wrote.

In a chat after tea or dinner, probably about this time, Blunt felt himself tempted to 'take up the cudgels for Huxley', whom he admired, when Carlyle said he detested some scientific writing, and Huxley's in particular. The Rector was wisely silent.

'It's no use contradicting Carlyle,' Huxley said to him, afterwards. 'He is so great and so old.'

Besides, it was difficult. His criticism of proselytising science was disconcerting. He did not deny that Darwin's doctrine of descent from ape-like ancestors was likely to be true. What he said to Blunt was that 'if true, it was nothing to be proud of, but rather a humiliating discovery, and the less said about it the better.'

Indeed it is a comfort, when we lament how few of our ancestors we can know, that there is none of us who has not cause to be thankful that he cannot know them all.

## XXIX

### AN INTELLIGENT WOMAN MAKES NOTES

(1874)

MRS. James Anstruther, or to her intimates 'A. A. A.'—Annabella Agnes Anstruther—a childless widow in her thirties, handsome, gifted, and enlightened, came from Scotland this year with a grown-up step-daughter Lucy. She had the able woman's eye for quality in mankind, and visiting Oxford found the dons were dull. Max Müller seemed the only clever man she saw there, although he had a short nose and 'up-curling lip' and 'no admiration for Homer', and was so superior to the cant of colleges that he 'maintained that *any* great poet *can* be translated into another tongue.' This surprised the lady, who had studied Greek and Latin, and was loath to believe that she

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of Gerald Blunt*, by Reginald Blunt, pp. 92, 96, 190-1, 228.



had been wasting her time. So she and Müller differed about Homer; but they agreed that 'Carlyle was the greatest writer in England'; whereupon he took her breath away by advising her to see her hero, and calmly offering her a letter of introduction.

This was in May. Next month she was in London, and wrote to remind him of his promise. He sent the letter, and she at once called on Carlyle. Her father, Sheriff Anderson, of Kilmarnock, who is believed to have led her to appreciate Carlyle, heard of her good fortune, and admonished her to write in full whatever she heard. She heard so much that it was impossible to do so; but in notebooks and letters she did her utmost, and succeeded well. Although so much younger, she died soon after Carlyle, at Rome in 1883; but her sisters preserved her notebooks and gathered together her letters. The rapid pencil jottings, made in haste but without delay, are almost as good as shorthand notes.

When she called, Carlyle received her with great kindness—a 'tall, gaunt, grizzled Scotchman'. She noticed his stoop, and the shaking of his right hand which only ceased when he had anchored himself in a chair.

They talked, naturally, of Ayrshire and Robert Burns, and he gave her his father's description of him.<sup>1</sup> In company Burns was at times grave and silent, but when he spoke it was always to the point. Carlyle considered his songs his best work, although Mrs. Anstruther held his sentiments to be much finer.

'Yes, poor Burns,' Carlyle said. 'He was like a beautiful flower growing among the surrounding weeds. If he had lived he would have done more, but he was a *true man*.' He shot her a sudden keen look to see if she had understood him, and she nodded.

On June 12 she went again. A picture of Knox on a chair, the Somerville portrait which he was then studying, naturally led him to speak of the Reformer. He turned the portrait to the light, and exclaimed: 'Ah, there he is. I never saw him before—now I understand the man. See how firm and upright he is. I like that mouth. He was one of the salt of the earth.'

'Don't you think he was somewhat intolerant, Mr. Carlyle?' the visitor suggested.

<sup>1</sup> From Mrs. Anstruther's private Journal and Letters, kindly lent by her sister to D. A. W. for present use.

'Not at all,—no toleration should be shown to what is wrong.' Carlyle was insistent upon this. When Mrs. Anstruther pleaded for toleration towards those who, although misguided, yet acted up to their lights, and 'did their duty as far as their limited capacity enabled them to comprehend it', he was just as emphatic. They were slaves and cowards, and he 'doomed everybody in the strongest language to the lowest hell who did not know the truth and act up to it.'

'But what is the truth?' the lady persisted. 'Since the day when poor Pilate asked that question, I do not think it has ever been or can be satisfactorily answered.'

She found that Carlyle hated a great many things and people, in which she could quite agree with him; but unfortunately they did not always happen to hate the same people, so that they differed, but he always remained quite amiable.

Remembering his strong partisanship for Cromwell, she was tempted to ask if he really thought the Protector was 'quite the thing and an out and out honest man'. Carlyle, 'glaring' at her, declared that he had no doubt whatsoever, and that England owed her present position to Oliver Cromwell, whom he refused to let her call a fanatic.

'If Oliver Cromwell was fanatic, it was only for the Divine Fanum.'

He went on to tell an anecdote of a Mrs. Beamish, a grand-niece of the Protector, a very decided middle-aged lady, who was travelling in a stage-coach in which one gentleman roundly abused Cromwell. She kept silence until the end of the journey, then she turned to the man and said: 'I'll not hear a word against the Great Protector. If you don't apologise immediately to me, here are two pistols,—you take one and I the other.'

'He did not wait,' Carlyle added. 'He gave in and ran away.'

'I hope you are not going to propose pistols to me, Mr. Carlyle,' Mrs. Anstruther cried, 'for I don't think I would run away!' Whereat Carlyle laughed heartily.

She found that he could not bear Gladstone, whom he stigmatised as a hypocrite who could persuade himself to do anything by pulling down the corners of his mouth and putting on a pious faith. 'Some day,' he added, 'he will say: "The time has now arrived and it is expedient that

the Queen's head should be cut off." And the poor little head would go !'

He did not dislike Disraeli, merely regarded him with contempt. They agreed that there was not a single honest man in the House of Commons—honest, that is, not in the narrow sense, but in the wider one, free from deceit in word and action.

He was voluble, too, in his criticism of the Irish, insisting that the English went to discover and colonise, and that thereafter the Irish race followed along and did mischief ; and of course he would not admit that either Swift or Wellington was a true Irishman. But it was chiefly of Burns they talked, and Carlyle teased her a good deal, to draw her out. She was naturally a great champion of the bard who had made the county of her birth so famous.

Carlyle reminded her that he drank himself to death, and behaved badly towards the poor moderate clergy of Ayrshire, to which she retorted that they deserved what he wrote of them, for they were 'canting hypocrites'. She defended the manner of his death by pointing out that he was not strong, and had been unfortunate, always struggling against poverty—'and as for drinking, I supposed it was a temptation to him, and he liked a dram.'

'Not a very uncommon taste,' Carlyle retorted.

'Oh, I don't know. Not to me, or to you, perhaps, a temptation, but to Burns certainly.'

He replied by relating a story of his being found one day, dead drunk, in the yard of a Dumfries inn.

'Well,' she answered stoutly, 'I don't care, I am willing to quote Burns's words and say,—“With such as he where'er he be, may I be saved or damned.”'

This 'roused Carlyle a good deal, and he bantered' her, leaning forward and peering at her with his keen eyes, and asking how she could stand this, and how she could stand that. However, she was prepared for anything, and quoted Burns's expression of his creed : 'Lord help us to lead a gude life, for a gude life makes a gude end,—at least it helps weel.'

'“Lord help us to lead a bad life,”' Carlyle promptly parodied, '“for a bad life makes a bad end,—at least it helps weel!”—That was what Burns might have said.'

Mrs. Anstruther shook her hand at him, and said she would 'always stand up for Burns, and put him on the same shelf and name him in the same breath with Homer, Shake-

speare, Dante, and Goethe.' Her notebooks show her to have been a remarkably well-read woman with sound direct knowledge of every one of these four authors, and able to weigh and consider them and most others better than many professional scholars, so that she could at least support her opinion.

When she took her leave, Carlyle shook hands with the utmost cordiality, and said, 'I find you very pleasant, but full of——'

'Contradictions?' she suggested.

'Erroneous opinions!'

Whereat she undertook to read his *Cromwell* without delay.

Another time, on June 30, she found him in the little garden at the back of the house, and he complained about the lack of rain, which had cost him some beloved plants brought from Scotland, 'from a certain grave there', and a thorn tree which he had brought and planted himself, and which he had thought would last as long as he did. He reminded her of Milton, his language reminiscent of *Lycidas* and the *Areopagitica*.

She was expected, as she had written in advance, and doubly welcome, as she had had the prudence to say that she did not expect an answer. She noticed that his letter-box was stuffed full, and he told her that she could have no idea of the number of letters he received daily, most of them wanting his autograph. One man persisted in writing endless letters on the currency question, on the expediency of paper coinage. 'After a few,' Carlyle said, 'I gave up opening them at all, and threw them away. Still he continued, and at last wrote to say it would be a great satisfaction to him if I would only write and acknowledge that I had received them!'

'Letters nowadays,' he said later, 'are written in such haste to save the post. Your correspondent thinks, when he has put a 1*d.* or a ½*d.* stamp on, he may write any rubbish he likes.'

He went on to tell of the life of a Mrs. Elizabeth Montague, whose letters he very much enjoyed. She was, he said, the founder of the blue-stocking club.

Speaking of orators, he remarked: 'I once went to hear the Duke of Wellington speak. I wanted to hear his voice. So I asked for a place and went down with my brother John to the House . . . and there they all were talking and grimacing, and I said to my brother,—"Take me away from

this, I would rather hear stinking fish cried.” Presently the Duke of Wellington got up, and I thought I had never heard a worse speaker in my life. But I found in a quarter of an hour that he was making a rough etching of his idea, of what he wanted to say, and in fact he was the only man there who gave me any clear impression of what he wished to say.’

Stuart Mill he spoke of as usual ; but Mrs. Anstruther was surprised, when she asked about Dickens and Thackeray, who had both been friends of his, that he much preferred Dickens. Thackeray he considered an unsatisfactory and dissatisfied man, and he did not care for his books. Dickens’s works had a great reputation, but he was very far from comparing him to Shakespeare, as he had heard done.

‘ All who would pierce to the inner veil,’ he said later, speaking of other things, ‘ all who would endeavour to apprehend the truth, must have been scourged and chastened. It is only by passing through the fire of affliction that the inner sight is cleared and strengthened.’

He spoke of the general depravity and chicanery : ‘ This great city of London, far too vast and great, not a drop of *pure* water, not a bit of good bread, can its thousands, its millions, obtain. The Queen herself cannot purchase these. . . . Instead of men being descended from the apes, they are much more likely to grow into them.’

Altogether, Mrs. Anstruther found his conversation highly stimulating, and he himself pleasant and very charming to her.

### XXX

#### ‘ POOR LITTLE ALLINGHAM ’, BENEDICT

(1874)

ON Saturday, April 5, Easter Day, Carlyle and Mary, accompanied by Allingham, went along to Millais’ studio, where they found the painter, ‘ big and stout, with cap on ’, busy on his work, ‘ The North-west Passage ’, for which Edward J. Trelawney, the swashbuckling friend of Byron and Shelley, now, after a life of almost incredible adventure, living in retirement, was sitting, appropriately, for the figure of the old mariner.

Allingham was pleased, on another walk on June 25 along the Chelsea Embankment, to hear Carlyle praising Wren, who had always been a favourite with him.

'I was some years in Chelsea before I took particular notice of the Hospital,' he said, 'and then I perceived it to be an honest, dignified structure, admirably adapted to its uses. St. Paul's is a very fine thing.'

Allingham 'hinted that the visible dome is but a wooden shell covering something like a glass-house chimney', but Carlyle was not perturbed, and continued with his eulogy.

'I remember catching a glimpse<sup>1</sup> from Cheapside of the huge Dome, its gold finger pointing to Heaven; human creatures creeping about (I one of them) on our petty errands. It was and is the grandest building I ever saw.'

For Westminster Abbey, or for any Gothic building, Allingham thought, Carlyle cared nothing.<sup>2</sup>

That month Allingham was confirmed in his journalistic career as editor of *Fraser's Magazine*, and very happy to feel securely settled. Now, at the age of fifty, he lost no time in astonishing his friends by announcing his intention of being married.

'His intended,' Carlyle told his brother John, 'whom he suddenly brought here one day and hailed me through the woods of Kensington Gardens along with, is a reasonable enough young woman, kind of artist in woodcutting or drawing for woodcutters; modest, rational, and miraculously content with her Allingham; to whom, poor soul, one cordially wishes all possible good.'

Helen Paterson became Mrs. Allingham on August 22, and often came with her husband afterwards on his visits to Carlyle.

Gavan Duffy was back in London by this time, on his way home to Ireland, and had several walks with Carlyle, who, however, was careful to avoid 'touching on Irish heterodoxies'. Another visitor 'from foreign parts' was George Bancroft, who had been American minister at Berlin for half a dozen years, and in 1846-9 had been minister in London, when he had been intimately acquainted with Carlyle. He was 'the channel through which his (Carlyle's) correspondence passed with Ripley and other . . . friends in America.' Now, on July 11, he found Carlyle 'cordial and pleasant'. He spoke of his improved condition in

<sup>1</sup> On his first visit to London.

<sup>2</sup> *William Allingham, A Diary*, pp. 232-3.

point of fortune, but it was 'but a melancholy enjoyment to him; and he said of it: "Ah, if she were but here to enjoy it", referring to the condition in which I had known them both.'<sup>3</sup>

Bancroft's conclusion was: 'I never heard a man more sincerely moved by grief at the thought of having been bereaved of his wife'; but there was no sign of 'remorse' or feeling of self-accusation.

Among books in which Carlyle sought distraction and profit, the new edition of Boswell's *Johnson*, 'purged of Crokerisms and Malmeisms', printed as Boswell wrote it, gave him a great deal of pleasure, and while he read Mary sat beside him, eagerly learning to draw! She had been thinking recently of a career of her own, and had been away more than once for short periods, with the Taylors to Brighton, and so on, as a kind of secretary. Another venture was a volume of Scots songs, which her uncle thought very well compiled; but although she took up painting very seriously in the late autumn, she continued for the most part at Cheyne Row, in charge of her uncle's correspondence and later of the house.

## XXXI

## KYLEAKIN AND KIRKCALDY

(1874)

IN the summer came the annual journey to Scotland, with Mary to keep him company and look after him. Lady Ashburton wrote urgently pressing him to join her as her guest for several weeks at the little hotel at Kyleakin, in Skye, where the sea air and bathing might do him a world of good. She prepared for his reception, it is reported, by arranging to board out all the poultry within crowing range of the hotel, so that he should not be disturbed. Little rough wooden huts were put up to accommodate them about five hundred yards away, at her expense.

Carlyle, of course, was the focus of local interest, followed about and watched during his promenades in front of the hotel, and not even allowed to bathe in peace until his

<sup>3</sup> *The Life and Letters of George Bancroft*, by M. A. D. W. Howe, II, pp. 275-6.

patience became exhausted to the point of driving him to plain words to his self-appointed retinue. But there was one notable of the district who was not overawed by the presence of greatness: 'The grand old patriarch of Kyle House, a taller and an even more picturesque-looking man than the exciseman'—a venerably bearded gentleman who joined the admiring crowd—'daily passed by the hotel,' says a reporter, 'proudly disdaining to look in the direction of the man who was attracting all other eyes towards him. At last, however, Lady Ashburton, observing this state of matters, made overtures to John, and duly introduced him to the sage, whereupon the two became great friends ever after until the departure of the illustrious party for the South.'

Edinburgh, of course, had to be visited, and as always there was bathing at Portobello, and Carlyle called on Laing 'in his angular little room in Parliament Square', when the Knox controversy was presumably allowed to sleep.

He remained as far as possible incognito, not even seeing Masson, and having little stomach for company, and particularly for the sort of public adulation that might have upset his quietude and could only irritate him. His old friend Swan offered him Springfield for a quiet holiday, but the lack of sea bathing was a potent argument against it, and he decided instead on a visit to the Provost's house, St. Brycedale, in Kirkcaldy. On the last day of August they went thither, enjoying the perfect quiet and comfort, and the finest of plunges in the sea. Swan had been, a very long time ago, a pupil of Carlyle's in his school in the town, which was incorporated later in a part of the Provost's mills. Carlyle paid a visit to the mills, and when they came to this particular room Swan paused, and asked him if he knew where he was. Carlyle had to admit he did not, whereupon his friend took him to a corner of it, and bade him look again. The alterations had been considerable, but suddenly he recognised it as the transformed schoolroom of long ago.

The Henry Drummond who was afterwards famous for his *Natural Law in the Spiritual World* was then a young man of twenty-five, and observed by a youth called Buyers Black to be among those who frequented the Provost's house to meet and talk with Carlyle; so when an Edinburgh editor wrote to Buyers Black suggesting that he might himself fill 'half a column about Carlyle's doings in Kirkcaldy', the ambitious youngster, never yet 'in print',



made haste to show the letter to Provost Swan, and was led into the garden and introduced to the distinguished visitor. Black noticed that he was smoking a long clay pipe and wore a big hat, and an overcoat which reached to his feet 'like a dressing-gown'. He received the lad in a very kindly manner, and presently Buyers Black had the pleasure of seeing himself in print for the first time.<sup>1</sup>

At 4.30 one morning a Kirkcaldy man early astir saw Carlyle sitting on the outside stair of a house in Kirk Wynd, not far from the Provost's, and was asked: 'Who is now living in this house?'

He told all he knew, and had a pleasant chat, discovering perhaps without words that Carlyle had been unable to sleep and had slipped out for a walk, which ended with his sitting down there. He pointed out the room 'on the left-hand side looking towards the stair' as the one he had occupied fifty-six years before.<sup>2</sup>

One Sunday afternoon, in carpet slippers, a big easy cloak, and soft hat, Carlyle slipped his arm through the Provost's and led him down the Kirk Wynd and along the High Street. He was, inevitably, smoking one of his long clay pipes. To make matters worse, service was just over in one of the churches, and 'the dispersing congregation were much surprised and almost scandalised to see their respected Provost and his friend meeting them on the street in such a manner.'

The Provost looked 'very uneasy indeed', and averted his face, although he could not succeed in withdrawing his arm, which Carlyle held in a firm grip.

Mr. Storrar of Kirkcaldy, a great friend, met them in the Kirk Wynd, and the Provost, in his usual Sunday black and chimney-pot hat, looked at him appealingly, as if to say, 'Isn't this too bad?' But of course Carlyle was quite oblivious of any misdemeanour.

A local editor was presented to Carlyle one day, and when asked, 'Who are you?' proudly told his trade, perhaps expecting a little flattery. But he was swiftly disillusioned.

'A most blackguardly occupation!' cried Carlyle, and launched into details in support of this indictment, which the journalist did not dispute. Like other professional men, editors are sensible to each other's shortcomings, and the result was a 'delightful hour' of conversation with Carlyle. Perhaps he realised that this sudden attack was only in-

<sup>1</sup> Letter of 19.6.1923 to *Glasgow Herald*, from J. Buyers Black.

<sup>2</sup> Letter of 11.7.1901 from W. J. Robertson, Kirkcaldy.

tended to draw him out, and was quite devoid of any personal application.

One Sunday evening after dinner, Provost Swan and his guests were gathered in the drawing-room, and someone proposed that Carlyle should read to them, to entertain the company, which was unusually large. Carlyle readily consented; but the only book visible at the moment was a Bible lying on the table. He picked it up, and opened it at his favourite Book of Job; but no sooner had he done so than in marched the servants, one after another, and he saw that he had been entrapped into conducting family worship. It was an astonishing dilemma. How would he get himself out of it?

Seemingly, he made no attempt to do so. He began with the first chapter, and read steadily through it, chapter after chapter, pausing now and then to comment on striking passages.

'Is there any taste in the white of an egg?' he read (Chapter VI, verse 6), and instantly looked up.

'God bless me!' he exclaimed, 'I never knew that was in Job!'

After he had been reading for some time, his niece went forward to the table, touched his arm, and whispered, 'Uncle, don't you think you have read enough for one night?' He gave her a pleasant smile, but blandly continued his reading and expounding. After two or three more chapters, she approached him again, and interrupted him more firmly this time. 'Uncle, you really ought to stop. You see, the servants are all in the room, and they'll have work to do yet.'

At this he rose suddenly, shut the book with emphasis, and exclaimed, loud enough for all to hear: 'Well, if I'm not to be allowed to read more, I suppose I must stop!' Then he marched out of the room, with an air of offended dignity.

Mary went up to his room soon afterwards, perhaps worried at his manner, and afraid that he was really offended. She found him laughing heartily, rejoicing at his happy escape from a very unfortunate position. At sight of her, he sobered, and said:

'I hope, lass, you're not offended? I could not see how else to get out of it!'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> A well-known story of which Mr. Alexander Carlyle contributed an accurate version to the *Athenæum*.

## XXXII

## JOHN TYNDALL MAKES A SENSATION

(1874)

IN his opening address to the British Association at Belfast this year, John Tyndall created a sensation by challenging the claim of professional Christians to monopolise 'cosmological theory', or guesses about the beginnings of things; and with a kind of wink, for he admitted he was looking where he could not see, declared he could discern 'in Matter . . . the promise and potency of every form and quality of life.' In a sense he was faithful to the teaching of Carlyle, inasmuch as he made loyalty to truth a foremost duty; but though he repeatedly named Carlyle with reverence, he did not hide that the view of the Universe as a living whole was wide as the poles asunder from the materialist conception of "architectural atoms" or a clock-maker God beholding idly from outside an infinite machine. And nothing could be more unlike Carlyle than speech upon such subjects then and there.

However, a little bit of talk reported by him without a name to it is recognisable as what he heard from Carlyle in private. "Did I not believe," said a great man to me once, "that an Intelligence is at the heart of things, my life on earth would be intolerable." Which is another way of interpreting the favourite phrase of Carlyle, and of Aird: 'The great soul of the world is just.'

## XXXIII

## LAST LETTER TO OLD BETTY

(1874)

IT was on Mrs. Carlyle's birthday that Carlyle used to send 'old Betty', Mrs. Braid, a yearly present and a letter, explaining once,—'I know well that except myself there is no other who so loved her and loves and daily thinks of her as ever you do. In her dear and blessed name I return you thanks and blessings.' This year he had written as usual (14.7.74); but on October 10 he seems to have received

a letter from Betty, whose husband had died, to which he at once replied.

‘Ever since the sad event that fell upon your household and parted a long companionship, carrying one away and laying the other on a sick-bed, you have been daily in my thoughts.

‘It was very sad and mournful the manner of your good husband’s sudden death ; but in the essence it was surely merciful withal,—a blessed deliverance of him from a load too heavy to be borne long. He is now gone to the silent home appointed for us all, where earthly sin and misery cannot reach him any more. In this sense I was well pleased to hear, as I anticipated, that you took the matter up and thankfully accepted what the Eternal Father had sent.

‘I am sad at heart to hear how weak you are in bodily respects, but it is the greatest comfort that the spirit is as clear and bright as ever, retaining all its calmness, and looking forward with the immortal hopes that lie beyond this afflicted Earth.

‘It touches me to the very heart what you say this morning of those that were and are dearest to me in this world, and whom for above threescore years you always faithfully loved. I know the honest tenderness of your heart, the noble piety, fidelity and continued integrity with which you have always loved ; and to say truth there has been for years back no living creature whom I thought more venerable than yourself.

‘“ Submitted to the Will of the Most High, in all things, great and small,”—that surely is the wisdom that comes from above. God bless you, dear Betty, through what remains of Time and through the Eternity that never ends.

‘If there were anything in which I could help you, I hope you know well it would be at once at your command ; but I doubt there is nothing.

‘Your good sister, I hope and trust, will not leave you till you are better. Thank Dr. Brodie much from me, and Mr. Bickerton, too, for the punctual news they send ; and beg them to continue : With my best blessings and a respect and sympathy which will last while I live.’

[Mrs. Braid died on 19.3.75, aged 85.]

## XXXIV

## SPEDDING'S LIFE OF BACON

(1874)

AT the end of the previous year, James Spedding had finished his seven-volume *Life and Letters of Lord Bacon*, which Carlyle had mentioned to his brother :

'Tuesday last I went again to dine at Forster's, Tennyson and Spedding there and no other company. Tennyson was distinctly rather wearisome; nothing coming from him that did not smack of utter indolence, what one might almost call torpid sleepiness and stupor; all still enlivened, however, by the tone of boylike naïveté and total want of malice except against his *Quarterly* and other unfavourable Reviewers. . . . Spedding looked a good deal better; clean as spring water, serious, simple, something of reverend in his aspect. He has actually finished his *Life of Bacon*, the last page of it gone to press; a right notable feat for Spedding; which I emphatically praised.'

Now the work was published, Carlyle reading it with diligence—far from a 'seductive' employment; and he declared it 'the hugest and faithfullest bit of literary navvy work I have met with in this generation'. Writing to Donne of the London Library, on November 13,<sup>1</sup> Edward FitzGerald said that the chief thing in a letter from Carlyle in reply to one of his was 'a *rhapsody* about Spedding's *Bacon*; which he extols above any Book in this last Generation: Spedding himself "invincible and victorious", Bacon no great Sinner, of an "opulent and indeed magnificent intellect", etc. Though allowing all this I cannot think it was worth forty years of Spedding's life. Yet I rejoice in Carlyle's opinion.

'I doubt not there is a little of Carlyle's spirit of contradiction in all this. He saw the wicked World inclining to condemn, or neglect both the Philosophers; and Carlyle hates the World more than Bacon. But I repeat I am delighted that he feels and speaks as he does.'

To Carlyle himself FitzGerald remarked,<sup>2</sup>—'I think I may venture so far as to guess that Bacon is not one of your Demigods.' In which opinion he was probably not greatly

<sup>1</sup> *W. B. Donne and his Friends*, ed. by C. B. Johnson, pp. 304-5.

<sup>2</sup> *More Letters of Edward FitzGerald*, p. 166.

mistaken, for Carlyle mentioned in a letter to Norton that he had tried to dissuade Spedding 'from giving his life to the work, but all in vain. Bacon is by no means one of the pillars of the universe,' he goes on. 'I read him thoroughly when I was a young man, quite persuaded of his greatness, but when after a while I was able coolly to ask myself what I had really got from him I found it was nothing substantial, some fine rhetorical or well-sounding sentences of very moderate wisdom was about the sum of my obligations!'<sup>3</sup>

According to Moncure Conway, he 'never thought very much of the philosopher who had been unable to recognise such a contemporary as Kepler.' Conway also records that when Miss Bacon maintained that Lord Bacon was the author of Shakespeare's plays, Carlyle's only reply (he was very patient with her, although afterwards he commented, in a letter, 'The woman is mad!') was, 'Lord Bacon could as easily have created this planet as he could have written Hamlet!'<sup>4</sup>

### XXXV

#### DISRAELI OFFERS A TITLE

(1874)

ON November 11, Lord Derby, then Foreign Secretary, wrote to Disraeli to propose a title for Tennyson, who already had a pension, and a title and pension for Carlyle, because he was, 'for whatever reason, most vehement against Gladstone. Anything that could be done for him would be a really good political investment.'

Disraeli concurred. He had already declared that he wished there was some comprehensive order in Britain like the Legion of Honour; now he appealed to Queen Victoria for advice.<sup>1</sup>

'Your Majesty's Government is now in favour with the scientific world. The Arctic Expedition, and some small grants which may be made to their favourite institutions, will secure their sympathy, which is not to be despised.

<sup>3</sup> *Letters of Charles Eliot Norton*, I, p. 434.

<sup>4</sup> *Thomas Carlyle*, by Moncure D. Conway, p. 122.

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield*, by G. E. Buckle, V, pp. 355-8.

‘Can nothing be done for Literature?’

‘Eminent literary men are so few, that there would be no trouble as to choice, if any compliment in the way of honour was contemplated. Mr. Disraeli knows only of two authors, who are especially conspicuous at this moment: Tennyson and Carlyle. He has no personal knowledge of either, and their political views are, he apprehends, opposed to those of your Majesty’s Government, but that is not to be considered for a moment.

‘He has an impression, that Mr. Tennyson could sustain a baronetcy, and would like it. Sir Robert Peel offered that distinction to Southey.

‘Mr. Carlyle is old, and childless, and poor; but he is very popular and respected by the nation. There is no K.C.B. vacant. Would a G.C.B. be too much? It might be combined with a pension, perhaps, not less than your Majesty’s royal grandfather conferred on Dr. Johnson, and which that great man cheerfully accepted, and much enjoyed.’

The Queen ‘entered into the spirit of the affair’, and readily consented, so Disraeli conveyed the offer to Carlyle in ‘a letter conceived in the grand manner, to the composition of which, it is evident from the interlined draft found among his papers, he had devoted considerable labour. The final version was composed at Bournemouth on Sunday, December 27, and next day a Treasury messenger brought it to Cheyne Row in the shape of a confidential official document under a large black seal.

‘SIR,

‘A Government should recognise intellect. It elevates and sustains the tone of a nation. But it is an office which, adequately to fulfil, requires both courage and discrimination, as there is a chance of falling into favouritism and patronising mediocrity, which, instead of elevating the national feeling, would eventually degrade and debase it.

‘In recommending Her Majesty to fit out an Arctic expedition, and in suggesting other measures of that class, her Government have shown their sympathy with science. I wish that the position of high letters should be equally acknowledged; but this is not so easy, because it is in the necessity of things that the test of merit cannot be so precise in literature as in science.

‘When I consider the literary world, I see only two living

names which, I would fain believe, will be remembered ; and they stand out in uncontested superiority. One is that of a poet ; if not a great poet, a real one ; and the other is your own.

‘ I have advised the Queen to offer to confer a baronetcy on Mr. Tennyson, and the same distinction should be at your command, if you liked it. But I have remembered that, like myself, you are childless, and may not care for hereditary honors. I have therefore made up my mind, if agreeable to yourself, to recommend Her Majesty to confer on you the highest distinction for merit at her command, and which, I believe, has never yet been conferred by her except for direct services to the State. And that is the Grand Cross of the Bath.

‘ I will speak with frankness on another point. It is not well that, in the sunset of life, you should be disturbed by common cares. I see no reason why a great author should not receive from the nation a pension as well as a lawyer and a statesman. Unfortunately the personal power of Her Majesty in this respect is limited ; but still it is in the Queen’s capacity to settle on an individual an amount equal to a good fellowship, and which was cheerfully accepted and enjoyed by the great spirit of Johnson, and the pure integrity of Southey.

‘ Have the goodness to let me know your feelings on these subjects.’

The letter to Tennyson reproduced the phraseology of the early portion of that to Carlyle. Tennyson had had a similar offer from Gladstone nearly a year before, and explained to both Prime Ministers in succession that he could not accept a baronetcy for himself, but would be grateful if such an honour could be secured for his son. Nine years later the poet was raised to the peerage on Gladstone’s recommendation.

Carlyle was astonished ; but he gave a full and considered reply as soon as might be.

‘ Yesterday, to my great surprise, I had the honour to receive your letter containing a magnificent proposal for my benefit, which will be memorable to me for the rest of my life. Allow me to say that the letter, both in purport and expression, is worthy to be called magnanimous and noble, that it is without example in my own poor history ; and I think it is unexampled, too, in the history of governing



persons towards men of letters at the present, as at any time ; and that I will carefully preserve it as one of the things precious to memory and heart. A real treasure or benefit *it*, independent of all results from it.

' This said to yourself and reposed with many feelings in my own grateful mind, I have only to add that your splendid and generous proposals for my practical behoof must not any of them take effect ; that titles of honour are, in all degrees of them, out of keeping with the tenour of my own poor existence hitherto in this epoch of the world, and would be an encumbrance, not a furtherance to me ; that as to money, it has, after long years of rigorous and frugal, but also (thank God, and those that are gone before me) not degrading poverty, become in this latter time amply abundant, even superabundant ; more of it, too, now a hindrance, not a help to me ; so that royal or other bounty would be more than thrown away in my case ; and in brief, that except the feeling of your fine and noble conduct on this occasion, which is a real and permanent possession, there cannot be anything to be done that would not now be a sorrow rather than a pleasure.'

The ' originator, contriver and architect of this beautiful air mansion ' was Lady Derby, and in sending her a copy of each of the letters next day, and in conversation with others, Carlyle declared Disraeli's behaviour magnanimous, generous, and noble. On Friday, New Year's Day, he wrote to his brother John, enclosing Disraeli's letter and his own answer, with instructions that the matter was to go no further than the family, no one, he thought, knowing of it except ' Lady Derby, whom I believe to be the contriver of the whole affair.' He went on : ' You would have been surprised, all of you, to have found unexpectedly your poor old Brother Tom converted into Sir Tom, Bart., but, alas, there was no danger at any moment of such a catastrophe. I do however truly admire the magnanimity of Dizzy in regard to me : he is the only man I almost never spoke of except with contempt, and if there is anything of scurrility anywhere chargeable against me, I am sorry to own he is the subject of it ; and yet see, here he comes with a pan of hot coals for my guilty head ! I am on the whole gratified a little within my own dark heart at this mark of the good will of high people,—Dizzy by no means the chief of them, which has come to me now at the very end, when I can have the additional pleasure of answering,

"Alas, friends, it is of no use to me, and I will not have it."

Disraeli wrote to Derby the same day (January 1), quoting the reply and saying,—'Alas, the Philosopher of Chelsea, though evidently delighted with the proposal, and grateful in wondrous sentences, will accept of nothing.'

As he was reluctant, however, to take 'No' for his answer, Lady Derby wrote in her most persuasive way to Carlyle. The Queen herself, as well as Disraeli, would be disappointed, and so on. On January 15 she dealt with him directly by word of mouth, using every earnest and friendly means of persuasion to get him to take some part or other of what was offered. When at last it was plain that there was nothing more to be said in that direction, she delighted the old man by telling him straight out that he had 'done well to answer No in all particulars'. She only begged him to let her tell of it, and went away with full permission to 'tell or publish whatever she pleased.'

To Disraeli himself she reported immediately: 'I saw old Mr. Carlyle to-day, and he scarcely knew how to be grateful enough for the mark of attention you had paid him. I assure you it was quite touching, to see and hear his high appreciation of the offer.'

To spread the news at large was pleasure unalloyed—it was all to the credit of everybody concerned. Both the offer and the refusal were a pleasant wonder. Many besides Carlyle recognised the magnanimity of 'Dizzy', although Allingham permitted himself, in the privacy of his diary, a very shrewd comment: he 'thought it would be a great triumph to Disraeli to be able to confer public favours on those who had publicly despised him, and put famed and haughty men under obligation to him.'

Allingham may have been right; but if he was, certainly Carlyle never let fall anything that would suggest he agreed with him. Instead he remained grateful for the magnanimity shown him, which pleased everybody, in which connection Froude offers an interesting side-light, which one hopes is historical:

He had entered an omnibus with Carlyle, who went inside while Froude climbed to the top.

'Fine old gentleman that, who got in along with you,' the conductor said to him. 'We thinks a deal on him down in Chelsea, we does.'

'Yes,' Froude replied, 'and the Queen thinks a deal on

him too, for she has just offered to make him a Grand Cross.'

'Very proper of she to think of it,' the conductor answered, 'and more proper of he to have nothing to do with it. 'Tisn't that as can do honour to the likes of he.'

## XXXVI

## COVENTRY PATMORE PAYS VISITS

(1874-75)

COVENTRY PATMORE, son of a London editor, who had found a livelihood in the British Museum and taken to poetry and divinity, had been sending his books to Carlyle from 1853, when he was thirty, onwards, and received unusual praise, blended with the customary advice to turn to matters of fact. He had been employed in cataloguing, and at the end of twenty years' service 'had come to the conclusion that, of the forty miles of shelves in the Museum, forty feet would contain all the real literature in the world: '<sup>1</sup>—a magnanimous thing for a man of letters to say, although perhaps he did not expect the public to believe it.

He had retired to the country, but late in 1874 returned to London, and stayed there some months before settling in Hastings. About the end of the year, he wrote to his wife: 'I mean to take advantage of the time here to see more of Carlyle. He seems quite pleased if I go and take a walk with him. The unison of our likes and dislikes is quite funny. You should hear him pour his scorn on ——' —perhaps Swinburne—' and I believe he is the only man living, besides myself, who dares to think, much less speak, evil of Heine.'

Patmore's biographer recalls with pleasure an evening they spent together with Carlyle and his niece Mary. 'It was evident that the intercourse was completely congenial,' he wrote. Patmore's 'quiet, reticent ways' and 'dignified deference' seemed to him exactly right. 'He said little, but what he did say was apposite and well-calculated to encourage the flow of brilliant, characteristic talk. Carlyle,

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs and Correspondence of Coventry Patmore*, by Basil Champneys, I, pp. 68, 280-2, 364-5; and II, pp. 309-15.

who naturally did most of the talking, was at his very best, and the chuckle which concluded his most savage sayings gave evidence of his present good-humour, while it afforded a valuable gloss on other apparent barbarities in his spoken and written words.'

Patmore noted that he used to see Carlyle constantly, and found him always more than kind, even affectionate, so that he never left without being begged to come again soon. They took many afternoon walks and drives together, and Patmore spent many long evenings in his chimney-corner. He was a good listener, never dreamed of contradicting him any more than he should have thought of 'contradicting a locomotive at full speed'. One day he mentioned that he had just finished reading the *Life of Frederick the Great*, and said some appreciative things of it. He was astonished at the effect on Carlyle, 'the pathetic way in which he expressed himself pleased by what I said, and his humble complaint that he had heard so few sympathetic observations' concerning it.

### XXXVII

#### TALKS WITH RUSKIN

(1874-75)

RUSKIN had fallen into the habit of coming up from Oxford once a week to spend some hours with Carlyle, and although his nervous susceptibility led him at times to be over-flattering to his 'dear papa', so that his visits were not always too welcome, in general their intercourse continued as before, the one unhappy incident of the famous *Time and Tide* letter long forgotten and forgiven. It was a 'bitter blame and shame' to him, in his own words, that he did not immediately make some record of those many talks, which were always so sincere and affectionate. On one occasion, however, he jotted down notes of what was said.

Carlyle was speaking of Goethe's painless death, and described how an hour before the end his sight began to fail him. The old man mistook this for darkness coming on, and said: 'Open the window-shutter, let us have more light.' This led Ruskin to recall the last words spoken to

pupils by old Dr. Adam, the great Headmaster of Edinburgh High School, whose funeral Carlyle had watched as a boy in 1809,—‘It grows dark, boys, you may go.’

Carlyle then told the history of Adam’s early life, and how as a boy in a Highland cottage he used to lie flat on the hearth to learn his Latin grammar by the light of a peat fire. At the time of his funeral a half-holiday had been given so that the boys might see the coffin carried by. They were grouped together, and as it passed within the graveyard railings they uttered a low wail. ‘The sound of the boys’ wail is in my ears yet,’ said Carlyle.

They afterwards discussed Mill’s essay on the substitution of patriotism for religion, and Carlyle declared it ‘actually the most paltry rag of’ a chain of contemptuous epithets too fast to note. The point of his indignation was Mill’s supposing that, if God did not make everybody happy, it was because He had no sufficient power—‘was not enough supplied with that article’!

To J. L. Motley he said something on similar lines some months later. On the last day of 1874, Motley’s wife died, and Carlyle made a special effort to call with condolences, the bereaved man deeply grateful for this mark of attention although he was not there when Carlyle came. Their friendship and esteem remained deep and strong. On the occasion of his daughter’s marriage, apparently, Motley remarked to Carlyle that happiness was not and was never intended to be the object of human life, and was answered: ‘Certainly, if to be happy in this world was the reason for man’s being put there, the Maker of it was a wretched blunderer.’<sup>1</sup>

On April 23, 1875, Ruskin read aloud to Carlyle his ‘Prayer of the monied man in Fors’, apropos the 119th Psalm and modern money-men: ‘Oh, how I hate Thy law! It is my abomination all the day; my feet are swift in running to mischief, and I have done all the things I ought not to have done, and left undone all I ought to have done; have mercy upon me, miserable sinner,—and grant that I, worthily lamenting my sins and acknowledging my wretchedness, may obtain of Thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness,—and give me my long purse here, and my eternal Paradise there, all together, for Christ’s Sake, to Whom, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory’, et cetera.

Carlyle ‘laughed with sparkling eyes’ and added: ‘Yes,

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence of J. L. Motley*, edited by G. W. Curtis, II, pp. 382-6.

Christ and the Holy Ghost are very sure to ratify that arrangement, if it is properly brought before them.'

The talk turning on Ruskin's mother led naturally to the 'future life', and Carlyle spoke of his own life as a burden, 'in the past only supportable by the help and affection of others,' and chiefly of his wife. Of the future he knew nothing, except that 'if it were Death, it was appointed by an entirely wise and righteous Creator; and if there were any hope of being re-united to any soul one had loved, it was all the Heaven he desired, and he could conceive of no Heaven without that.'

To all he said Ruskin listened, trying to believe, but hiding from Carlyle his weakness, as he had hidden his dabbling with spiritualism, because he must seek comfort where the 'familiar spirits' were always ready to offer it.

### XXXVIII

#### LAST MAGAZINE ARTICLES

(1875)

ALLINGHAM, as editor of *Fraser*, had prevailed upon Carlyle to allow him to print the *Early Kings of Norway*, and the manuscript, in Mary's careful and meticulously accurate handwriting, was passed to him along with the corrections and additions suggested by Dr. John Carlyle, who was an Icelandic scholar. Allingham edited the manuscript, incorporating these emendations, and the work duly appeared, in three parts, in January, February, and March issues.

'How delighted I was with Carlyle's *Kings of Norway* in *Fraser*,' Edward FitzGerald wrote to W. F. Pollock, in February; 'in some respects better than his earlier self: less "Sound and Fury"—indeed, none at all. Oh, if all History could be written in that way!'

'Why,' he wrote, on another occasion, to Anna Biddell, 'Carlyle's wine, so far from weak evaporation, is only grown better by Age: losing some of its former fierceness, and grown mellow without losing strength. It seems to me that a Child might read and relish this Paper, while it would puzzle any other man to 'write such a one.'

To Carlyle he mentioned, some months later, that there

was a Saint Olave's Priory on the River Waveney: 'The People call it "Saint Tuler's"'. I wonder if an old Gentleman of Ipswich be of that kingly Blood: an Inscription there runs:

In peaceful silence let great Tooley rest,  
Whose charitable deeds bespeak him best.'

Allingham had also persuaded Carlyle to give him the paper on the Pictures of Knox, which had been begun on November 17 of the previous year, and 'which, with fingers and eyes of my own,' Carlyle had told his brother, 'I could finish almost within a week. . . . Probably the last thing I shall write in this world; comfortable solely, if even so, by the pious intention of it, if it can have any result at all.'

The paper gave him a good deal of trouble, but eventually it was completed, and was published in the April *Fraser*.

Laing, needless to say, was not impressed. He wrote, after reading it: 'You will excuse me in still saying I have no faith in your *Somerville portrait*. . . . Being, what you may call, an *obstinate blockhead*, I will maintain as I have done for the best part of forty years past, that the said wood-cut '—Beza's—' is the *only genuine and well-authenticated portrait of the Reformer*.'

Carlyle, however, was only glad to have done with the whole affair, and let it rest thereafter.

The *Early Kings of Norway* and *Six Portraits of John Knox* were reprinted together in book form by Chapman and Hall later in the same year.

## XXXIX

### AUGUSTUS HARE MEETS CARLYLE AGAIN

(1875)

ON February 7, Augustus J. C. Hare was visiting Lady Ashburton's home, dutifully filled with admiration for its beautiful arrangement,<sup>1</sup> when Lady Bloomfield came in, followed by Carlyle, 'weird and grim, with his long coat and tall wizard-befitting hat. He talked in volumes, with fathomless depths of adjective.'

<sup>1</sup> *The Story of My Life*, by Augustus J. C. Hare, IV, p. 305.

The conversation ran for a time on Garibaldi, whom Carlyle described as the 'most absolute incarnation of zero', although the 'inexplicable perversity and wilfulness of the human race had taken him up, poor creature, and set him on a pedestal.'

He went on to deal with 'the poor old Pope, so filled with all the most horrible and detestable lies that ever were conceived or thought of,' and described him as like the man who asked his friends to dinner and said, 'I am going to give you a piece of the most delicious beef—the most exquisite beef that ever was eaten,' and all the while it was only a piece of stale brown bread; but the host said to his guests, 'May God damn your souls for ever and ever, if you don't believe it's beef!' So they ate and said nothing.

Hare, however, missed—if he knew—that this was merely quotation from one of the best bits of Swift's *Tale of a Tub*.

Carlyle talked also of Mazzini's books, which were 'well worth reading', and of Saffi, 'made Professor of something at Oxford, where he used to give lectures in a moth-eaten voice.'

## XL

### MRS. ANSTRUTHER AGAIN

(1875)

IN June, Mrs. Anstruther went calling again, and found Carlyle 'very well and most cordial and agreeable'.

'At my time of life,' he told her, 'many reflections crowd upon me, which I am no longer able to write down, with my own shaking hands, and I never feel that I can say what I wish through another. Therefore they must go down with me unsaid. And when I contemplate that future, all is mystery,—we can know nothing, we can imagine nothing. When this encircling clay is shaken off, the conditions will be so changed that we can predict nothing. There is nothing but to trust in God, no other religion that I know of.'

He denounced Popery as 'the most blasting, the most soul-enthraling superstition.' How any reasonable being could propose to trust in it he could not understand. 'Come



not near me, with your crossings, your bowings and your hocus-pocus and your corpus Christi and so forth,—keep out of my sight.'

'As an offset', Mrs. Anstruther 'suggested that we had the superstition of Moody and Sankey,' but that Carlyle treated as a very insignificant thing. 'He had been told that they were sincere, ignorant Yankees, but he had also heard in Edinburgh that they had sold many thousand pounds' worth of organs.'

He laughed over Kenealy being returned for Parliament, and at the supporters of the 'ill-used nobleman', the Tichborne claimant. 'I never read much about the fellow,' he said. 'After I saw that the original Sir Roger knew French, that it was his mother tongue, and that this butcher did not know a word of it, I never troubled myself with more of the evidence. If I had had anything to do with it, I would have tried him for seven days and hanged him on the eighth!'

Mrs. Anstruther was delighted, as her own views coincided with Carlyle's, and she noted: 'The great pleasure of listening to Carlyle is to hear expressed in the most forcible and eloquent language the thoughts and ideas which simmer in my brain, but to which I can seldom or never give utterance. After denouncing the love of money, the cant, the shams, the hypocrisies of the present day, he added, "But there is also much good, often lying concealed."'

She mentioned the writings of Theodore Parker, who had been a welcome visitor of his in 1843, and he told her he had known and liked the man, whom he found a good, sincere sort, but 'quite crazed on the subject of slavery'.

Another day, the talk fell on Huxley and Darwin.

'These are only theories,' Mrs. Anstruther said. 'They can never be proved; let them theorise about them; and as for an Atheist, I don't believe the animal exists.'

'That's what David Hume said when he went over to Paris,' Carlyle replied, 'and Diderot said,—"Count us, there are seven of us here."'

He talked for a while of his early days, of how he never supposed he was capable of writing, but desired to express the truth as far as he could dimly perceive it; and he added: 'For any good I have done, for any difference it has made to the general public, I might as well have left it alone, if I could. As Schiller has said, "Against stupidity the Gods fight in vain."' But the present state of matters

cannot endure. I do not wish to be a prophet, but I think fifty years will see this out.'

It is curious that, with his letter-box daily stuffed full of testimonials to the immense prestige he had gained, and the influence he exerted, he should have failed to realise that his life-long battle with stupidity had been far from in vain.

'What do you do on a wet day?' he asked Mrs. Anstruther, later. 'Do you read a book?'

'Yes,' she replied. 'A good many.'

He gave her his favourite quotation, 'only repeated to people who would understand it', to the effect that 'every day you should read a little in a sensible book, and if possible speak a few sensible words.' She replied that the 'if possible' was a very necessary proviso.

He mentioned that he had seen Tyndall the previous evening, 'a clever man in his scientific way', although he should have left spiritual things alone—which was a reference to the speech at Belfast.

Carlyle was expecting Sir William Stirling Maxwell, so could not go out driving as Mrs. Anstruther wished him to, but when she left he accompanied her to her carriage, and found Lucy, the step-daughter, there. He was quite upset because she had not come in, but had sat there waiting for fully an hour and a quarter. He duly admired Patch, the dog, and chatted to the coachman, Adams, for a moment or so.

On June 25, Mrs. Anstruther went again, hoping to take him for a drive, but he was just about to leave for a sitting with Boehm, the sculptor, who had made an admirable little statuette of him the previous year on a commission for Lady Ashburton, and was now doing a full-size statue. Ruskin was with Carlyle, who offered to introduce him. She found him a 'carefully dressed, elderly dandy', with a 'precise formal manner, very dogmatic. I asked him how his road-making prospered at Oxford. He said they were rather languid this year. I said that was only what might be expected from amateurs.

'“Not at all, my dear madam,” responded Ruskin very quickly, and he proceeded to argue that amateur work might be and in fact was quite as good as any other work.—What I remarked and admired in Ruskin was his reverential demeanour towards Carlyle. It made me think of a sage of ancient Greece with a disciple.'

In a letter to a sister on July 5, Mrs. Anstruther summed

up her impression of the notables she had met, and of Carlyle :

‘ The man I liked best was old Mr. Carlyle . . . a wonderful talker. . . . He took a drive with us one day with his niece, a nice little thing. We went out to the country and he steered, directing Adams the most complicated roads ; by Clapham, Wandsworth, and we finally landed in Dulwich ! I asked him to come and see us at Ballikinrain, if he comes to Scotland this year. . . . He says he is too old to go and pay visits. But he is very active, walks out every day. Except that his hand shakes very much and he cannot write, one would not observe anything very aged about him.’

## XLI

## GENERAL WILSON CALLS

(1875)

THE departure of Mrs. Warren the cook now led Carlyle’s niece to venture on a change of diet for her uncle, in consultation with Dr. Blackiston. His usual dinner for a long time had been ‘ the lean meat of one chop, from which he had cut off the fat ’, and to this Mary now added some variations, giving him pepsine too, and declared he became ‘ more cheerful and less lean and nervous ’.

He liked a good fire, and long after his right hand was useless he used to save his niece trouble by handling the coal-scuttle himself with his left hand. She often watched to anticipate him. The unusually sharp hearing that made him suffer from noises all his life was compensated in old age. A little deafness was noticed at last, but his ears were then syringed and as soon as the wax was removed he heard again ‘ to perfection ’, and so continued. No eye-strain ever afflicted him, and although for some years in old age he had recourse to spectacles, he outlived the need for them, and long before he died could read without them.

As this year was to complete his fourscore, there was speculation this summer about giving him something like the seal he himself had long ago contrived for Goethe. Few schemers on his behalf were so satisfactory to him as General James Grant Wilson, the American, whose ‘ barrel of beauti-

ful apples' earned 'sincere and cordial thanks'. Being in London now, Wilson called again and made notes.

He spent an evening at Cheyne Row, listening for two hours to Carlyle. The day before, he had been introduced to a London notable whom Carlyle now contemptuously described as 'him whom men called Dizzy', and declared that he was 'not worth his weight in cold bacon!'

As the General was a literary man, the talk fell naturally on Carlyle's early struggles, and his failure to find a publisher for *Sartor*, which was rejected by half a dozen houses before America took it up and made a book of it.

Presently a young man came in, and received immediate attention, although his name is not recorded, nor what he said.

'Yes, lad, teaching is tough work, as I well know,' Carlyle told him. 'But hold fast to it till something better offers, and do the duty that lies next to you.'

'Observing that he still appeared despondent,' Wilson goes on to report, 'Carlyle added, as he was leaving, "Cheer up, lad. There's gear to win you never saw!" And when the door closed he said: "I knew that young man's father and grandfather—both upright and industrious men; and he has good right to be proud of his honest Scottish ancestry."' <sup>1</sup>

## XLII

### WILLIAM BLACK IS INTRODUCED

(1875)

**H**ANDSOME William Black, the popular Scottish novelist, had written to Allingham asking him if he would take him to see Carlyle—'one of the few ambitions of my life'. Allingham obtained the necessary permission, and accordingly on July 24 Black lunched with the Allinghams and accompanied them down to Cheyne Row.

The old man 'received him civilly, and we then walked by the Embankment, Chelsea Hospital, King's Road, Ebury Square, and back to Oakley Street. The talk was most about Scotland,' Allingham noted.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Personal Recollections of European Celebrities*, 6th Paper, Thomas Carlyle, by General J. G. Wilson, Editor of Appleton's *Cyclopedia of American Biography*, &c.

<sup>1</sup> *William Allingham, A Diary*, p. 238.

Black, a little man with a big moustache, and still in his thirties although already famous, had been bred in Glasgow, born in the Trongate, and it was natural that he and Carlyle should exchange reminiscences. The novelist noted the 'deeply lined ascetic face' and 'sorrowful eyes', and the 'trembling fingers' with which he lit his pipe.

'I do not think that I shall see Scotland again,' Carlyle declared. 'To me it has become a sad and strange and solemn country, now that all my kinsfolk and friends are gone. And then there is the fatigue of the long journey; and the noise and the sleeplessness make travelling almost impossible for me. As it is, I suffer a great deal of physical misery, and also of mental gloom.'

Then, 'in a lighter strain', he told of his first arrival in Glasgow in 1820, and the Glasgow folks in those days and walks in the Highlands and talks with Irving.

He laid aside his pipe at last, and proposing a stroll, rose to open the window to air the room. Black volunteered to do it for him, 'but no! With a gentle old-fashioned courtesy one seldom encounters nowadays, the offer is declined, though the trembling hands find difficulty with the sash. But eventually the window is raised.'<sup>2</sup> Then he exchanged his dressing-gown for a cloak and slouch hat, and they set out.

'This Chelsea Embankment now is about the cheerfullest place I know of,' he remarked: 'the brightness and general liveliness of it; the river flowing and shining; those small eager steamers puffing on their way, and carrying their loads; the open sky; the trees; the people walking up and down, to breathe the fresh air; the nursemaids and the perambulators and the children—the young generation coming on: even those brats of laddies . . .'

He looked at them as he spoke. A 'tatterdemalion', says Black, was 'twirling himself round the iron rail overlooking the Thames, and threatening every moment to pitch himself into the stream,' when suddenly Carlyle gripped him by the scruff of the neck and hauled him back on to the pavement.

'You young rascal,' he cried. 'Do you want to throw yourself into the water?'

Black noticed that Carlyle 'did not talk Scotch, not any dialect of it; but he spoke with a strong insistence

<sup>2</sup> Article by William Black in *Good Words*, reprinted in *The Eyes of Youth*; and see also *William Black*, by Wemyss Reid, pp. 384-5.

of emphasis. Esteem for Tennyson was shown by his anxiety lest the 'Banjo Byrons' might displace him, and the novelist could only explain to himself what he heard by the likely guess that Tennyson, who was very touchy, had been complaining.

About female fictioneers, 'There's that woman they call Miss Braddon,' he said, 'and there's that other who calls herself Ouida. God forbid that I should read their trash; but if what I am told of it be true, then when they go before Rhadamanthus, I should think their sentence would be forty stripes save one.'

As they strolled about, he showed himself greatly interested in the Chelsea Pensioners and in their 'gardening occupations and amusements', remarking: 'There are two of them—I do not see them at the moment—who serve as an excellent example. One is a helpless cripple and cannot get about by himself; the other has lost his eyesight and cannot get about by himself. So the lame man places himself in a Bath chair and directs it, while the blind man pushes behind; and together they have their small rambles, doing no harm to any living creature, and each of them profiting by lending the other what the other lacks. We had fine men for soldiers in those days; look at their stature even now, old and shrunken as they are.'

Thereafter the talk wandered away into Germany, led thither through a book by Black, who was disappointed at Carlyle's lack of admiration for the Germans, which he explained to himself by the suspicion that the Germans did not properly appreciate Goethe. 'The most notable man in Literature for two hundred years,' Carlyle called him. 'The one man who has shown us what Christianity might be without the husks and cloaks that have been heaped upon it. But there is no real religion at the present day. And the man or the nation that has no religion will come to nothing.'

He regretted he had never seen Goethe face to face, and added: 'Thackeray's recollection of Goethe was vague and inaccurate. Thackeray had a confused memory of Goethe being a dark man.' As the conversation drifted to other German authors, the question, 'Which of them do you like best?' was boldly answered: 'Heine.'

'For the next quarter of an hour,' according to Black, 'poor Heine had a bad time of it,' and the race he belonged to as well, on his account, 'fit only to eat sausages made

of toads.' There was no real fun in the Jews—a cynical grin, no honest laughter. Happily Black was silent, and let the 'thunders and lightnings' pass, so that a blink of sunshine surprised him after the storm: 'After all let us remember that he wrote the *Lorelei*. And there was good humour in his satire of Borne.' So Black could recall how often he had heard the women of Germany sing,—

Luft ist kühl und es dunkelt,  
Und ruhig fliesse der Rhein.

(The sky is cool, and it's darkening,  
And quietly runs the Rhine.)

Afterwards, their talk became more intimate and personal. Carlyle 'appeared to have the kindest and humanest interest in the family relationships and circumstances of anyone he might chance to be talking to, however unimportant'; equally notable were his 'sympathy and encouragement for literary aims and ambitions that must at his age have seemed trivial.'

Carlyle ended by asking, abruptly: 'Well, sir, and when are you going to seriously set about writing a book?'

When they parted, with Carlyle's kindly 'I wish you well,' Black found that he could not help lingering to watch the old man's figure receding along the grey pavement.

To Carlyle, history was always the most important form of composition. Meredith was another of those whom he urged to forsake fiction,<sup>3</sup> and he would probably have dated as some time in the seventies his own defence of fiction to Carlyle: 'Carlyle, do you know what historians remind me of?'

'No.'

'They are like a row of men working in a potato field, with their eyes and noses turned down in the furrow, and their other end turned towards Heaven.'

Carlyle 'listened and sighed', and then said: 'Well, perhaps that's very true.'

The old man 'never asked me to write history again', Meredith concluded.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> See *Carlyle to Threescore-and-Ten*, Book XXIV, Chapter I.

<sup>4</sup> *As I Went on My Way*, by A. J. Ashton, p. 82.

## XLIH

## MORE ON RELIGION

(1875)

CARLYLE, Froude tells us, 'did not think it possible that educated honest men could even profess much longer to believe in historical Christianity. He had been reading the Bible. Half of it seemed to be inspired truth, half of it human illusion. "The prophet says, 'Thus saith the Lord.' Yes, sir, but how if it be not the Lord, but only you who take your own fancies for the word of the Lord?"'

As Spinoza has written, 'The Jews never make any mention or account of secondary or particular causes, but in a spirit of religion, piety, or what is commonly called Godliness, refer all things directly to the Deity. For instance, if they make money by a transaction, they say God gave it to them; if they desire anything, they say God has disposed their hearts towards it; if they think anything, they say God told them. . . . We must not suppose that everything is prophecy . . . which is described in Scripture as told by God to anyone.'<sup>1</sup>

There was no novelty in this. Luther had explained it to Melancthon, correctly. The prophet's words, 'Thus saith the Lord', can only mean that 'Gods poke with them in their consciences.'<sup>2</sup>

Carlyle, according to Froude, held that 'scientific accountings for the moral sense were all moonshine. Right and wrong in all things, great and small, had been ruled eternally by the Power which made us.' Froude saw inconsistency in his attitude to Christianity, and his denunciation of Strauss; but the disciples may have been mistaken in good faith, and disbelief in the history of the Resurrection, or indifference to it, is perfectly consistent with an objection to religious controversy, and impatience with the literal loquacity of Strauss.

As Allingham reports,<sup>3</sup> he had called the *Life of Jesus* a 'revolutionary and ill-advised enterprise, setting forth in words what all wise men had had in their minds for fifty years past, and thought it fittest to hold their peace about.'

Walking with him and his brother Dr. John on August 4,

<sup>1</sup> Spinoza's *Theologico-Political Treatises*, Chapter I.

<sup>2</sup> Luther's *Table Talk of the Patriarchs and Prophets*, DXLIX.

<sup>3</sup> *William Allingham, A Diary*, pp. 211 and 238-9.



Allingham heard him describing Michelet,—‘a curious kind of historian—very wise and truthful—puts in a good deal of struldudgery.’ And thence, by way of Bradlaugh and an article in *Fraser*, he was led to speak of *Primitive Christianity*, and said of Newman’s article, ‘I could not read it. I know Primitive Christianity was some sort of high and holy enthusiasm. I do not in the least believe that *God* came down upon earth and was a joiner and made chairs and hog-troughs, or came down at any time more than He comes down now into the soul of every devout man. There is no use in saying anything more in the matter. Let it rest there.’

‘People are still busy with the old dogmas, and they still interfere with life, individual and social,’ Allingham pointed out.

‘I don’t want to see Christianity falling all away to ruin—a bit faster than it is doing,’ Carlyle replied.

Still Allingham persisted, mentioning Stuart Mill on Religion.

‘It is like the last mew of a drowning kitten!’ Carlyle cried. ‘People speak as if “Comfort” were the one thing; as if Divine Providence had not intended man to go through many things and learn much thereby, by labour and self-denial and misfortune and even misery.—John Mill wasted away his soul.’

About this time, a sensational trial was pending at the Guildhall, of a number of bankers who were all ‘church-goers and by profession very religious men’. A clergyman who was a friend of F. D. Maurice was staying with the Rev. David Thomas, D.D., of Clapham, and spent some hours in the company of Carlyle. On his return he told his host much of what Carlyle had said, amongst which was :

‘What a sad thing those preachers are making of that character.’

‘What character do you mean, sir?’

‘I mean Christ,’ he replied. ‘These men now at the bar of justice were all church-goers; if their parsons, instead of reiterating in their ears their own little dogmas and speculations and sentimentalities, Sunday after Sunday, had flashed that character upon their consciences, they *could not* have been guilty of the charges.’<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *Thomas Carlyle, a Memorial Discourse*, delivered 13.2.1881, by Rev. David Thomas, D.D., at the Augustine Independent Chapel, Clapham Road, London, pp. 11 and 12.

The use of the ancient Catechism in primary schools was occasioning a good deal of discussion in Scotland, now that the schools were passing out of the control of the Churches, and it is reported that Carlyle, who did not interfere or take sides, declared in a letter to a friend, 'The older I grow—and I am now on the brink of eternity—the more comes back to me the first sentence in the Catechism, which I learned when a child, and the fuller and deeper its meaning becomes—"What is the chief end of man? To glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever."' In the *Reminiscences* he had noted that his father could have said so 'from the depth of his soul'.

To another old friend, a Free Church minister, he made a remark on the other side of the dispute. The Rev. Hately Waddell, who first came to see him in 1861-2, and was now preaching in Glasgow, a leading spirit on the school board, may have been the man who was calling about the time of the dispute, and said: 'The Shorter Catechism inculcated in easily intelligible words the highest ideal of life that the young could receive.'

'I don't think so,' said Carlyle.

'Well,' persisted the minister, 'take the first question and its answer: "What is the chief end of man? To glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever." Is not that as elevating a question and as true an answer as can be given?'

'I don't think so.'

'Then can you give a better? What do you believe the chief end of man to be?'

'The chief end of man is to do his damndest.'<sup>5</sup>

This is simply a colloquial summary of *Sartor*, like Pasteur's habitual remark: 'Donner son maximum d'effort en ce monde, c'est atteindre le but de la vie.'<sup>6</sup> To do one's uttermost in this world is to hit the mark and make life worth living.

Another conversation on similar matters occurred when, about this time, Alexander Campbell Fraser, the philosopher, called on Carlyle, 'found him in solitude', and was 'regaled for a full hour, in a benign spirit, a contrast to the cataract of denunciation to which I had listened in 1850, when I first met him. He spoke tragically of early days at Kirkcaldy . . . all expressed in vivid pictures.'

<sup>5</sup> A. Montgomery Bell in the *Spectator*, 1.12.1917, &c., as told him by Dr. John Brown (author of *Rab*, &c.); corroborated on further enquiry.

<sup>6</sup> *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1908, p. 130.

There followed reminiscences of student days in Edinburgh, so very long ago now, of 'a dainty gentleman, we called him Missey Brown', an 'imposing figure at tea-parties'; of 'the stalwart Ritchie', who was 'great at curling' if not at contriving those neat little partitions of man's divine spirit at which Brown excelled; and there was also some sincere praise of David Masson, 'very brave, for he has undertaken to write a history of the universe from 1608 to 1674, calling it a "Life of John Milton".'

Mill naturally came up for discussion too, which led to some strictures on the new theories, the discovery that 'God was protoplasm', and 'spelt with a little "g".'

'The older I grow,' he concluded, 'and I am now near death, the oftener I return to that lesson I learned when I was a boy. I was told that the chief end of man was to glorify and enjoy the great God. Can you give me anything better; or better than the prayer that I make every morning—"Thy will be done"? What more can any man's prayer ask for than this?'

'A cordial grasp of the hand immediately followed these words,' Fraser reports, and he saw Carlyle no more.<sup>7</sup>

## XLIV

## CHARLES DARWIN

(1875)

ALTHOUGH Erasmus Darwin had long been an intimate friend, his more famous brother Charles was practically a stranger to Carlyle until this summer. Carlyle was enjoying the silence of the country at a house of Lady Derby's, at Beckenham, near the Crystal Palace, reading Michelet's history in the open air till about two o'clock, and driving in the afternoons. One of these afternoons, he called on Charles Darwin, and liked him and his family well.

Darwin by this time was sixty-six, his river of beard was grey.

'Carlyle,' he reported,<sup>1</sup> was 'seen by me several times at my brother's house, and two or three times at my own. . . . His expression was that of a depressed, almost despondent

<sup>7</sup> *Biographia Philosophica*, by Alexander Campbell Fraser, pp. 245-7.

<sup>1</sup> *Charles Darwin*, by Francis Darwin, I, pp. 77-8.

yet benevolent man; and . . . he laughed heartily', but seemed to sneer too much. 'One day in my house he called Grote's History "a fetid quagmire, with nothing spiritual about it." He laughed to scorn the idea that a mathematician, such as Whewell, could judge, as I maintained he could, of Goethe's views on light.'

Tyndall was the man of Carlyle's choice to go into that, not Whewell, and yet, as Darwin remarked with surprise, 'He thought it a most ridiculous thing that anyone should care whether a glacier moved a little quicker or a little slower, or moved at all.' And he could not even pretend to care.

Happily Tyndall himself did not heed that. It was he who had often said he would like Carlyle and Charles Darwin to meet, and as Carlyle was returning, in a pony carriage with his niece, they encountered Tyndall on the road in the company of William Spottiswoode, whom he had fetched to see them.

'He met us,' said Tyndall, 'with the exclamation: "Well, I have been to see Darwin." He paused, and I expressed my delight. "Yes," he added, "I have been to see him, and a more charming man I have never met in my life."' <sup>2</sup>

Although he had said hard things about the *Origin of Species*, and similar investigations, he was delighted with Darwin personally, and reported to his brother: 'Darwin and family pleased me very much, and indeed it is a good while since I have seen any brother mortal that had more of true sociability and human attraction for me.' He told Allingham that he had asked Darwin if he thought there was a possibility of men turning into apes again, at which sally the scientist had laughed heartily, and 'came back to it again and again.' <sup>3</sup>

## XLV

### A. B. F. MITFORD AS NEIGHBOUR

(1875)

**I**N 1874 A. B. F. Mitford received from Disraeli a fine berth in the Board of Works, and taking to himself a wife went to live in Cheyne Walk in Chelsea the follow-

<sup>2</sup> *New Fragments*, by John Tyndall, p. 388.

<sup>3</sup> *William Allingham, A Diary*, p. 239.

ing year. His father had been a Hampshire man, familiar at the Grange, and he himself when in the Diplomatic Service in Japan had put together a fine book, *Tales of Old Japan* (1871).

Carlyle, he tells us,<sup>1</sup> bade him come to see him, and since he had known the old man from childhood, and was not the least afraid of him, although he used to stand in 'considerable awe' of Mrs. Carlyle, he gladly obeyed. 'The wise old man was always kind and gentle to me,' he wrote. 'So I often used to go and see him on Sunday afternoons when he sat in his dressing-gown in the little room at the back, smoking his long churchwarden.'

Sometimes they went walking together along the Embankment or in Battersea Park, Carlyle putting away his pipe and donning a 'long brown coat and soft wide-awake hat' and taking his stick. They were often accompanied by Sir James FitzJames Stephen. Carlyle was keenly interested in all Mitford could tell about Japan, and 'cross-examined' him repeatedly. He made the diplomat very proud once by telling him: 'I have read your *Tales of Old Japan* from Alpha to Omega.' There was 'too much blood and murder' in the stories, but that was not Mitford's fault.

Summarising the memories of many years, he declares roundly: 'I was shocked by Froude's publications. No falsier portrait of a great man was ever handed down to posterity. . . . Would Carlyle's friends have loved him as they did had he been the snarling, spiteful, inhuman monster that he represents, without one scintilla of the rare geniality and of the power of friendship which he possessed?

'He was a good hater,' Mitford goes on, 'such as Johnson would have loved.' But his hatreds were political; socially, he could show a touching tenderness. 'I have walked with him and sat with him by the hour, without hearing him say an ill-natured word of man or woman.'

And of course there was his famous laugh, which robbed so many of his utterances of their sting, and which could never be set down when his words were repeated in cold print.

Mitford found that he did not suffer fools gladly, hated to be bored, and abhorred lionising; but he was 'always kind to everybody with whom I saw him', during the last thirty years of his life.

Once, Mitford induced him to talk of the stage, which at length he did 'with all the rugged enthusiasm that was

<sup>1</sup> *Memories of Lord Redesdale*, II, pp. 649-51.

in him both of Jenny Lind and Grisi, contrasting the two : " the burning, passionate nature of the fiery southern woman with the calm, cold temperament of the northern singer " —those were his very words.' He gave ' due meed of praise to both, but always with a tilt of the scale in favour of Grisi '—who incidentally in complexion and character was of the type of Mrs. Carlyle.

' On the stage,' Mitford goes on, ' he recognised one figure above all others. He told me how he had seen Talma act in Paris—how great he was—how far ahead of all other actors. What appealed to him strongly was the statuesque side of the great player's genius, how completely he looked the part. . . . " That man could so drape himself in a toga so that you just felt that you had one of the ancient Romans before you ! " ' "

Carlyle spoke ' with the fire he admired in the " Southern woman " ', Mitford adds.<sup>2</sup>

## XLVI

### MISS CLARENCE WINTHROP BOWEN

(1875)

WHEN an American lady, Miss Clarence Winthrop Bowen, called at Cheyne Row this year, without an introduction, she was shown into the room on the ground floor and entertained there by Dr. Carlyle for fully an hour, while Carlyle was in the room above with some Members of Parliament. When she questioned the doctor, she heard that his brother walked ' regularly before breakfast along the Thames Embankment ' and took ' more exercise in the afternoon in one of the parks.'<sup>1</sup> After breakfast he attended to his correspondence, which had increased so greatly that many letters had to be scrapped unread, and few could be answered, since he could not write himself—' a serious drawback to one who has been accustomed to do his thinking with a quill in his hand.'

Carlyle came downstairs and laid down his pipe and took up his hat. His brother drew his attention to Miss Bowen. ' Umph ! ' he said. ' Who are you ? ' "

<sup>2</sup> *Memories of Lord Redesdale*, I, pp. 197-8.

<sup>1</sup> " Mr. Carlyle at Home ", in the *English Independent*, 23.9.75.

The ready reply was : ' One of a multitude in America who have read your books and desire much to see you.'

' I am going to walk,' he replied. ' Come with me.'

So they went out together.

She began by trying to get him to talk about ' himself and the questions of the day ', without success ; but drew him out upon theology.

' Germany,' he remarked at length, ' is in a state of theological transition. Dogma is yielding to fact. The Christian Church is changing ; but the grand truths of Christianity are unalterable. In the hands of Bismarck, the chiefest statesman of the age, Germany's progress is as certain as the rising of to-morrow's sun. Nothing is to be feared. With England there is more smoke than fire in the air.' He disliked ' the new movements of the Ritualistic party of the established church ; but the points in dispute were trivial, and should vanish when weightier problems remain unsolved.'

He had a poor opinion of Gladstone and his recent pamphlets on Vatican Decrees and other matters. His ' gravest fault ' was that ' he looked exclusively at the side issues of great questions. He recognised the bearings and appearances, not the underlying fact ; and a fact, he continued, was a divine revelation, and he who acted contrary to it sinned against God.'

' Is Gladstone, then, only a politician ? ' the lady asked.

' Much worse,' was the answer, she reports ; ' for he always acts the politician with the wisdom of the statesman.'

At a street crossing, when they were half-way over Carlyle ' suddenly stopped, and stooping down kicked something out of the mud, at the risk of being run over. With his bare hands he brushed the mud off and placed the white substance on a clean spot on the kerb stone. " That," said he, in a tone as sweet as I have ever heard, " is only a crust of bread. Yet I was taught by my mother never to waste, and above all bread, more precious than gold, the substance that is the same to the body that the mind is to the soul. I am sure the little sparrows or a hungry dog will get nourishment from that bit of bread." '

Allingham records a similar incident, when he picked up a piece of bread and placed it on a ledge, so that the birds could get it—showing a thoughtfulness and consideration not too common even in these days.

## XLVII

## MRS. ALLINGHAM'S PAINTING

(1875)

ALLINGHAM'S wife Helen, who naturally went with him sometimes to visit Carlyle, was a water-colour artist of considerable ability, and conceived a desire to paint a portrait of her husband's hero in the setting of his own home. Accordingly this autumn she came to see him for this purpose, 'at Mary's invitation'.

When Mary called her uncle's attention to 'our special artist', who had arranged her paraphernalia upon the sofa, he said, 'What?' Then, realising what was in the wind, he exclaimed: 'I'll have nothing to do with any sketching.'

But the visible distress of the young woman, who had set her heart upon doing the portrait and deserved humouring—she was soon to become a mother—united with Mary's persuasions, and proved irresistible. He allowed her to remain, and sat down before the fire to read a translation of a Russian poem lent by Madame de Novikoff, and she heard him call the poet a 'blathering blellum'.<sup>1</sup>

On November 5, Mrs. Allingham was there again, making good progress. Browning came in, fresh from Normandy, congratulating Carlyle that the newspaper reports of his illness were false, and declaring: 'I have often lamented not to have availed myself more of your company of late,' and reminding him of visits long ago to their house at Camberwell, where he talked Scots to Browning's mother, a Scots-woman. 'You told me the Scots name for buns—*cookies*,' he concluded.

'I hear you have been bringing out several new books rather lately,' Carlyle said. 'I always read your books and find them well worth it, but I have not seen these.'

'I'm afraid of you in that way!' Browning retorted. 'I'd sooner trust my body to you than my book.'

'What is the last about?'

'It's called *Aristophanes' Apology*. I felt in a manner bound to write it, so many blunders about Aristophanes afloat, even among the so-called learned.'

Carlyle praised his translation of Euripides' *Alcestis*—'The very best translation (of it) I ever read'—and recommended him to do more.

<sup>1</sup> From *Tam o' Shanter*, by Burns—a 'noisy, empty talker'.



Browning admired the artist's work, which he declared 'very like'.

Later in the afternoon, when Carlyle was passing Allingham's house, having doubtless escorted the delicate young wife home—her first child was born three days after—her husband, who happened to be in, came hurrying out after him to hear more about Browning, and overtook him in the Fulham Road, walking with him thence to Lady Ashburton's door at Knightsbridge. On the way he told Allingham, 'Browning in his young days wore a turn-down shirt collar with a ribbon for neck-tie, and a green coat. I first met him one evening at Leigh Hunt's, a modest youth, with a good strong face and a head of dark hair. He said little, but what he said was good.'<sup>2</sup>

It is noteworthy that the cat which appeared in Mrs. Allingham's picture of Carlyle in his garden appears somewhat elongated, but we have Miss Margaret Carlyle Aitken's word for it that it was in fact an unusually long cat—a great pet, too.

Once when she arrived at Cheyne Row on a visit, her sister Mary, taken by surprise, was not quite ready for her, and being short of milk diluted what supply she had with water, to eke it out in the emergency. As usual, the cat was punctual, and their uncle himself poured out his milk for him; but whenever pussy tasted the mixture he walked away with his tail in the air.

'What a funny thing of that animal!' Carlyle exclaimed. 'What's the matter with him?'

So Mary was compelled to confess.<sup>3</sup>

Mrs. Allingham's baby was christened Gerald Carlyle, a tribute which must have pleased the old man. He had a deep affection for his 'poor little Allingham', and it would have been a brave man indeed who would have ventured a disparaging word about him in Carlyle's hearing.

Meeting Allingham on November 18, he asked for 'Madam and the Homunculus', remarking: 'A Baby is the most wonderful of all phenomena in this variegated world.'

He sent it a silver mug as a first gift, with an inscription, in a facsimile of his handwriting: 'Gerald Carlyle Allingham, his little Cuppie (T. C. 1875).' On at least one occasion, Mrs. Allingham at parting was adjured to 'take care of your little son!'

<sup>2</sup> *William Allingham, A Diary*, pp. 240 and 271.

<sup>3</sup> Told to D. A. W. by Miss M. Carlyle Aitken.

## XLVIII

## HONEST OPINIONS

(1875)

IN the seventies, Percy FitzGerald was, as he described himself, a literary man of all work, labouring in all the departments. John Forster gave him the privilege of several invitations to dinner-parties when Carlyle was present, usually at Christmas-time, when he noticed that the host was careful to provide a churchwarden pipe and 'a screw of the seer's favourite tobacco'. Browning, Reade, and once Lord Lytton are named as present.<sup>1</sup>

'After dinner,' FitzGerald relates, 'the sage drew in his chair, and a picturesque figure he looked . . . by the fire-side, puffing his long pipe, uttering his dry humorous sayings,' with a melodious burr that sometimes 'rose to vehemence'. The reporter may himself have been the anonymous 'Irish gentleman' who made Carlyle vehement by discussing 'the state of his country'—'whereon the sage delivered himself, I recollect well, in not unmusical tones:—"Ye see, the Irish may have their grievances, and they have been harshly treated; but I tell you, sirs, before I'd listen to one word from them, I'd just, with sword and gun, shoot and cut and hew them all until I'd taught them to respect human life, and give up their murdering. *Then* I'd listen to them."'

Carlyle went on thereafter to dwell in an interesting way on the poor, unhappy sister isle, 'deploring the abolition of the Irish Church. The presence of an educated clergyman in the wilder districts was a wholesome evidence of civilisation.'

FitzGerald quotes without date a letter from Carlyle which may have been a continuation of the same talk: 'You mistake much if you consider me blind to the beautiful natural faculties and capabilities of the Irish character, or other than a loving friend to Ireland (from a very old date now), though I may have my own notions as to what would be real friendship to Ireland and what would be only sham friendship.'

When FitzGerald privately enquired of Forster, 'What is your genuine opinion of Carlyle's style and writing?' he

<sup>1</sup> *Recreations of a Literary Man*, by Percy FitzGerald, I, pp. 8, 176-85.

was answered: 'Don't permit yourself to be laughed out of an honest admiration of Carlyle's way of writing. No doubt it is well to have models of a pure and perfectly correct style (which his is not) for general imitation'—in short, he is not like Swift and Addison. 'The great merit of Carlyle's style is that it so wonderfully reflects the man himself. . . . You have but to talk with Mr. Carlyle for an hour to see that he does not put it on as an actor would his dress, but that his thoughts take that form. . . . If he gets his results he cares little by what means—and, like Luther's, his words are less arguments than blows. The final test, after all, is whether a man's style helps him to the very best method of saying what he has to say; and in this case I think it does. . . . There never was such a style for pictures. The *French Revolution* is quite marvellous in that respect. The succession of scenes flash all their philosophy and meaning into you as if by intuition; and I have often thought that old Samuel Johnson must have had writing of this sort in view, when he told Boswell one day that he fancied mankind might come in time to write all aphoristically, growing weary of preparation, and connection, and illustration, and all those arts by which a big book is made.'

## XLIX

## THE EDINBURGH MEDAL

(1875)

ON November 20, Carlyle was writing to his brother John to tell of the arrival of a 'big Doctor's Diploma and sublime little letter from the President of Harvard College, with which I know not yet what to do; never having been consulted about it, and being resolute never to accept such a Title and yet reluctant to fling the whole affair irreverently in their faces, good souls who meant to gratify me highly.'

However, although he still would not accept the style of 'Doctor'—as he once said, for fear of being confused in Heaven with his brother—he eventually decided to accept the diploma, since refusal would give needless disappointment to men who had shown themselves heartily well dis-

posed towards him and anxious only to do him such honour as lay in their power.

Shortly after, a sincere admirer in the remotest and most northerly of the British Isles, Arthur Laurenson, a prominent merchant in Lerwick, the capital of Shetland, conceived the idea of paying tribute to Carlyle in the same manner in which he had, long ago, paid tribute to Goethe. As soon as the project was mooted, it aroused immense enthusiasm. Crowds of worshippers of the Sage of Chelsea subscribed, and a gold medallion portrait by Boehm was struck, each of the subscribers receiving as a memorial a copy in bronze.

Sir Edgar Boehm, a sculptor for whom Carlyle had a warm regard and great admiration, had in April, 1874, executed a statuette of him for Lady Ashburton, and at the beginning of 1875 a large statue, the best as well as the best-known sculptures of Carlyle. He used to tell that his sitter, who could be wonderfully patient but could equally well be extremely impatient, announced to him brusquely, 'storming in at the door in the guise of one of his own northern gales': 'I'll give you twenty-two minutes to make what you can of me,' and pulled out his watch and stood with it in his hand. Punctual to the moment, Boehm pushed aside his clay and announced that the time was up, the sitting finished, which so delighted Carlyle that he gave him another twenty-two minutes, and later came often, allowing the sculptor to study him 'to the core', and proving himself 'the delightful companion he knew how to be when the spirit moved him'.<sup>1</sup>

The medallion by Boehm was presented on Carlyle's eightieth birthday, December 4, with the least possible fuss and formality, and was received with genuine gratitude for so striking a mark of widespread affection. Edward FitzGerald had not at all liked the idea, fearing that it would only give offence, and he had even delayed sending up his name in the hope that it would arrive too late—which it did not; but he was delighted when he learned that Carlyle had been far from annoyed.

The wording of the address which accompanied it was by John Morley and Professor Masson, and the first signature was that of Carlyle's old Dumfries friend, Thomas Aird. Other prominent names were Charles and Erasmus Darwin, Browning, Tennyson, George Eliot, Edward Dowden,

<sup>1</sup> Sketch of Sir Edgar Boehm by 'Constance Eaglestone' in *Blackwood's Magazine*, Vol. 149, p. 348.

Richard Garnett, T. H. Huxley, Laing, Lecky, Lyttleton, Houghton, Harriet Martineau, Neave, the Stephens, Anthony Trollope, and a host of others—of whom one at least, Henry Reeve, had been antagonistic to Carlyle—one hundred and nineteen names in all.

The originator, Arthur Laurensen, had special reasons to feel keen admiration for Carlyle, not only as the 'Great Protestor against Shams'. Laurensen was a considerable authority upon Scandinavian matters, the Shetlanders being pure Norsemen by descent, and Carlyle's interest in Teutonic and Scandinavian history and legend, and more particularly the then recently published *Early Kings of Norway*, gave Laurensen the feeling of a personal contact.<sup>2</sup> He certainly could never have had a happier inspiration, or one which could appeal more to the countless numbers of Carlyle's ardent followers.

The text of the address ran :

'We beg leave, on this interesting and memorable anniversary, to tender you the expression of our respectful good wishes.

'Not a few of the voices which it would have been dearest to you to hear to-day are silent in death. There may perhaps be some compensation in the assurance of the reverent sympathy and affectionate gratitude of many thousands of living men and women, throughout the British Islands and elsewhere, who have derived delight and inspiration from the noble series of your writings, and who have noted also how powerfully the world has been influenced by your great personal example. A whole generation has elapsed since you described for us the Hero as a Man of Letters. We congratulate you and ourselves on the spacious fullness of years which has enabled you to sustain this rare dignity among mankind in all its possible splendour and completeness. It is a matter for general rejoicing that a teacher whose genius and achievements have lent radiance to his time still dwells amidst us; and our hope is that you may yet long continue in fair health, to feel how much you are loved and honoured, and to rest in the retrospect of a brave and illustrious life.

'We request you to do us the honour to accept the accompanying copy of a medal, designed by Mr. J. E.

<sup>2</sup> See *Arthur Laurensen, his Letters and Literary Remains*, by Catherine Spence. I am indebted to Thos. M. Y. Manson, Lerwick, for this reference, —D, W, M,

Boehm, which has been struck in commemoration of the day.'

Another proof of high esteem came from a quarter from which Carlyle would never have anticipated anything of that nature, so that it was all the more pleasing.

In his copies of Carlyle's writings, Bismarck had 'underlined doubly and trebly all the passages in which this author speaks of political genius,'<sup>3</sup> and now he sent him 'assurances of respect which the Chancellor had never shown for any German man of genius.' Half a century before, Carlyle had received letters of the same tenor from Goethe. 'Historians,' Bismarck said, 'always see through their own spectacles. Why I prize Carlyle so highly is that he understands how to get inside another's soul.'

On December 2, he wrote, in German, to this effect :

'The celebration of your seventieth [*sic*] birthday concerns Germany too, and to you I may say that in my mother tongue. As you introduced Schiller to your countrymen, so you have placed before the Germans our great Prussian King in his full figure, like a living statue. What you said long years ago of the Hero as Author—that he is under the noble necessity of being true, has been fulfilled in yourself, but, happier than those of whom you then spoke, you rejoice in what has been done, and continue your work in rich strength, which may God long preserve to you. Accept with my cordial congratulation the assurance of my sincere respect.'

Carlyle replied, on December 10 : 'On Saturday morning, my eightieth and most probably my last birthday, I was honoured with a letter, by far the most remarkable, the least expected, and the most pleasing of all that reached me on the occasion. It was the noble, wise, sincere, and magnanimous letter which you had the goodness to write to me, and which I read with great surprise and with great and lasting joy. Allow me to say that no honour could have been done me which I should have valued more highly, and which would have lived longer and more kindly in my memory, while it is yet permitted to me to live in this world. What you are pleased to say of my poor

<sup>3</sup> *Bismarck*, by Emil Ludwig, English translation, pp. 476, 484. The Letters of Bismarck and Carlyle hereafter quoted are taken from the German version of Froude's *Life of Carlyle*, where they figure in an appendix.

history of your great King Friedrich seems to me the fittest and most flattering utterance I have yet heard on this subject anywhere, and from the mouth of such a man it makes me proud indeed. I thank you most heartily and sincerely for your kindness, and shall continue, as I have long done, to wish you all fortune and prosperity on your great and noble path. May God give you years and strength to complete and securely to fortify against all storms the grand and prosperous enterprise in which you have already before the eyes of all the world done such great things.'

To his brother John he wrote: 'Prince Bismarck, you will observe, thinks it is my 70th Birthday, which is enough to quench any vanity one might have on a Missive from such a man: but I own to being truly pleased with the word or two he says about *Friedrich*, which seems to me a valuable memorial and certificate of the pains I took in that matter, —not unwelcome in the circumstances.'

Some months later, when Lecky mentioned that *The World* had published what purported to be the substance of Bismarck's letter, 'all wrong from beginning to end', Carlyle remarked, 'It was a flattering thing to receive such a letter, saying that I had "raised a living statue of their great King"—could not be a finer compliment. There was nothing to make him write such a letter but his own free will; not a word of humbug in it that one could see.'<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *William Allingham, A Diary*, p. 246.





**BOOK XXX**

**THE LAST PHASE**

**1875-81**



## LESLIE STEPHEN AGAIN

(1875)

ON the afternoon of Wednesday, December 1, Carlyle and Allingham were walking 'in the snow and dusk in Cromwell Road',<sup>1</sup> and there encountered long Leslie Stephen, with his blond beard and velveteen coat. Stephen's wife, a daughter of Thackeray, had died in confinement on the previous Sunday.<sup>2</sup> He saw them, and turned and shook hands.

'I am very sorry for you, sir,' Carlyle said. 'My own loss did not come in so grievous a way.'

Stephen departed without a word, and as they walked on Carlyle said to his companion: 'We feel some pity in such cases, but small, small, small it is.' Then, his thoughts reverting to his own bereavement, he added: 'I look back often to those times of poverty in my life, and richer they seem than all California! And *She* going through it all so nobly and so queenly,—without any recognition almost! Ah me!

'That winter I went to Mentone was the saddest of my life. I used to go into an olive grove and meditate most sadly on many things.'

Afterwards they talked of Shelley, and later in the same month renewed the discussion—although Allingham was little enough inclined for it. To him, Shelley was 'a star in his sky', but with creditable patience he endured Carlyle's strictures: 'Shelley had not the least poetic faculty. I never could read anything he wrote. It was all a shriek merely.' And doubtless he chuckled when he told Allingham, 'Browning came on my birthday and talked loud. He agreed with me about Shelley and his poetry.'

Allingham was prepared for this. He had himself 'with

<sup>1</sup> *William Allingham, A Diary*, pp. 241-2.

<sup>2</sup> *Life and Letters of Leslie Stephen*, by F. W. Maitland, pp. 253-4.

pain ' heard Browning ' speak slightly of Shelley '. He confessed—to his diary—that Emerson also had told him, ' I can see nothing in Shelley's poetry, beyond some pretty verses in *The Skylark* and *The Cloud*.' In vain had Allingham quoted and persuaded him to read further. ' If I don't know what poetry is, I don't know anything,' Emerson retorted.

The verdict of Browning and Carlyle is perhaps more readily comprehensible nowadays than it could be to Allingham's generation.

## II

### THE DEATH OF FORSTER

(1876)

ON Tuesday, February 1, 1876, Dr. Quain came to Cheyne Row, in a state of considerable agitation and distress, to break the news, as gently as he could, that Forster was dead. It was not altogether unexpected; for years he had been ailing, and had recently been severely ill, with Quain in attendance; but his death was an irreparable loss.

' It is the end of a chapter in my life,' Carlyle wrote to his brother, ' which had lasted, with unwearied kindness and helpfulness wherever possible on Forster's part, for above forty years. . . . But in all cases,' he concluded, ' we have to adjust ourselves under it, and be thankful for what of human good there has been in it, without repining that it has come to an end. To poor Forster himself, it has clearly been an immense deliverance from long years of pain and distress.'

On February 5, he attended the funeral, where he found himself, unexpectedly, constituted chief mourner next after Lord Lytton.

Next month he was at Westminster Abbey beholding the belated wedding of John Tyndall, fifty-six years of age, which W. B. Donne of the London Library reported to Edward FitzGerald, who wrote in reply: ' Yes, I too was touched by Carlyle's attendance at *Funeral and Wedding!* a thing he would scarce have done when a younger and stronger man. Like you I can now think of him as " dear

old Carlyle"—which I had not thought of before. I wonder if he sometimes meditates on his old acerbities and thinks they have not come to much.<sup>1</sup>

In March, Alexander MacMillan the publisher risked a return of his sciatica by going to the Abbey to see the funeral of Dean Stanley's wife.<sup>2</sup> 'A striking sight,' he called it, and was not sorry that he had gone. 'Matthew Arnold was close by me,' he reported. 'Carlyle sat next the Archbishop of Canterbury, who occasionally pointed out (to him) where in the service they were, and Carlyle peered down with apparently reverential interest. On the other side of the Archbishop sat Lord Shaftesbury.'

When Froude raised the tentative suggestion of burial in Westminster Abbey for Carlyle himself, however, the old man was emphatic. 'There will be a general gaol delivery in that place one of these days,' he said, and contemptuously quoted Tom Paine's conclusive retort to St. Paul: 'The grain of corn does not die; or if it dies does not rise again.'

News came too from Canada, that his brother Alick, to whom Carlyle had recently sent a New Year's gift of £150, had died on March 30. They had been close associates in youth, and Alick remained always grateful for the many kindnesses received from his elder brother. On his death-bed, with his eyes closed for the last time, and his mind wavering just before the end, he exclaimed: 'Is Tom coming from Edinburgh the morn?'—an incident which touched Carlyle deeply. Many a time Alick had convoyed him to meet the Dumfries coach near Moffat, or to bring him home from it.

'Poor Alick, my ever faithful brother!' he wrote to Dr. John. 'Come back across wide oceans and long decades of time to the scenes of brotherly companionship with me, and going out of the world as it were with his hand in mine.'

<sup>1</sup> *W. B. Donne and his Friends*, edited by C. B. Johnson, p. 316.

<sup>2</sup> *Life and Letters of Alexander MacMillan*, by Graves, p. 335; and *Letters of Alexander MacMillan*, p. 291, which correct A. J. C. Hare's mistaken account in his *Story of My Life*, IV, p. 367.

## III

## ON CHELSEA EMBANKMENT

(1876)

**S**HORTLY after Forster's death, a very young man, Richard Renton, had an encounter the memory of which he treasured ever after.

While walking into town along the Chelsea Embankment, about eight o'clock in the morning, he noticed an old man with a long loose cloak, a plaid round his shoulders, and a wideawake hat, 'leaning with folded arms on the parapet', as if gazing into the water in deep meditation.

Perhaps because he heard the footsteps stop, or because he was about to return home, the old man swung round face to face with Renton, who immediately recognised Carlyle. 'There was ever something awe-inspiring,' he says, 'in the intentness of Carlyle's gaze. His eyes seemed to burn into your very soul. It was so now. I stood like an idiot, open-mouthed.

'I should as soon have thought of assaulting as of addressing him.' But the old man must have guessed his agitation and diffidence, for he flung a question at him.

'Where goes it? Where goes it?'

The very manner of Carlyle's speech, Renton declares, sharpened his wits, and he gathered that the reference was to the River. So he replied, with a smile:

'It returns to the sea.'

'Right, sir, right!' Carlyle exclaimed, and went on his way.

Thus a very old man gently passed the time of day with a gaping youth, who remembered with gratitude and left a pleasant little incident on record.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *John Forster and his Friends*, by R. Renton, pp. 46-8.

## IV

STUART J. REID BECOMES ACQUAINTED  
(1876)

ON a cold grey morning in March, a young man from Newcastle, Stuart J. Reid, who was intent on seeing all the sights of London, was examining the carving on the Prince Albert Memorial in Hyde Park, in half a gale of wind.

'The Park was almost as bare of people as the trees of leaves,' he wrote.<sup>1</sup> 'Suddenly there slouched up the steps an old man in a loose, round cloak and a tumbled-looking wideawake . . . leaning heavily on the arm of a friend.' He began to 'make energetic and not too complimentary remarks on the portraits of the world's celebrities,' and Reid knew at once that he was in the presence of Thomas Carlyle, who was walking with Allingham. Reid noticed particularly the 'white hair, closely cropped grey beard and moustache, and half-fierce, half-tender deep blue eyes.'

After a while, with a shrug and a gesture of impatience, Carlyle started down the northern steps, but when near the bottom he stopped abruptly. 'There,' Reid goes on, 'at the foot of the steps, was a nursemaid engaged in brisk flirtation. The neglected baby, throned high in his perambulator', was squalling vociferously. 'Carlyle came to a halt immediately above the disconsolate child, and lifted up both hands with a show of amazement, and then, looking down, exclaimed, in accents of gruff sympathy,—"What's the matter wi' you?"' The baby was hushed in an instant into awe-stricken silence, and looked up through its tears in comical wonder at the strange old man, who bent towards it with a kindly smile. The girl, abashed at this, flew swiftly back to her duty, and Carlyle said: "Keep your heart up, keep your heart up, you'll be done with it some day." And so, swinging his stick with one hand, and leaning on the arm of Allingham with the other, he passed slowly on his way down the broad walk by the side of the Serpentine.'

<sup>1</sup> Stuart J. Reid, author of *The Life and Times of Sydney Smith, &c.* These quotations are from one of many newspapers in which an article of his was reprinted in 1902; but in a letter he certified their correctness to D. A. W. and gave leave to quote.

After a time, he seemed to grow tired, and sought refuge on one of the old-fashioned wooden seats. Reid never knew how it came about, but presently he found himself in conversation with the old man, who looked up at him and asked him a 'disconcerting question', to which he replied, with ready wit, by quoting from *John Sterling*. Carlyle 'threw back his head and laughed', inviting the stranger to take a seat beside him. He talked, asking questions, forestalling Reid's intention of putting questions to him, then suddenly spoke of his 'ebbing strength'. When the young man rose to go, Carlyle 'stretched out his hand and wished me "well now and always"', and then added, in tones that linger with me yet, "Aye, aye, and what we know not now we shall know hereafter." So I left him,' Reid concludes, 'in the wild March morning battling with his fluttering cloak.'

This year an old journalist in London, James Hogg, who chanced to be one day in Chelsea neighbourhood, remembered a message for Carlyle that he had received more than thirty years before, and had delayed delivering. Bethinking himself,—“He's over eighty, and if I delay longer I may never have the chance”—he called and saw him. 'Very nervous and feeble,' he found him. He let the conversation drift hither and thither, but gradually brought it round in the direction he desired, to recall de Quincey and their old working days.

By this time, he tells us, Carlyle 'had become animated. I then told him I had a message to him from an old friend, now no more. I gave de Quincey's words as faithfully as I could: "If ever you meet Carlyle, will you tell him from me——"; and he charged me with a solemn and moving message. I dare only say that it referred to Mrs. Carlyle, who had nursed him about 1827.

'As I spoke, Carlyle started and quivered, and the tears sprang into his eyes. It was some little time before the tremor ceased. Slowly, sadly, tenderly, he murmured ejaculatory recollections,' which seemed to relieve his distress.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Nights and Days with de Quincey*, by James Hogg, in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, Jan. 1890; quoted in Mrs. Ireland's *Life of J. W. Carlyle*, p. 313, Appendix, IV.



## V

## BRUMMAGEM JOE

(1876)

JOHN MORLEY had recently made friends with Joseph Chamberlain, 'Brummagem Joe', and it was probably in this year that he brought him to see Carlyle, introducing him as a Radical Reformer, a politician bent upon abating the nuisance of our public-houses, which a boom in trade was making worse than ever.<sup>1</sup> Chamberlain introduced as a private member in opposition a bill for municipalising the liquor traffic on the Gothenburg system, and held forth to Carlyle on his plans as if addressing a great public meeting. There is no record of what Carlyle thought of his new visitor's 'long lean head and adventurous nose'; but he said that he 'rejoiced to hear that this mighty reform was being attempted.'

When the question of making compensation to the dispossessed publican was mentioned, Carlyle 'took fire', and 'burst into full blaze'. He fiercely smote the arms of his chair, and with flashing eyes and emphatic voice, as if addressing an imaginary publican before him, cried: 'Compensation! You dare come to me for compensation! I'll tell you where to go for compensation! Go to your father the Devil—let him compensate you!'

When he ended, Chamberlain patiently stated the case of the respectable butler set up in a well-conducted tavern, and Carlyle listened attentively and then 'admitted genially that he might have been all wrong'—or rather that there might be a case for compensation in particular instances. In reforming public-houses, there could be no need for unjust dealing with men whose places had been well conducted; in any event, Carlyle was never a teetotaler, although always eager to see the trade in drink controlled for the public good, instead of being left to private profit-seekers.

<sup>1</sup> *Recollections of John Viscount Morley*, I, p. 154.

## VI

## LAST VISIT TO A COUNTRY HOUSE

(1876)

ON June 16, Mrs. Anstruther came to London, and called on Carlyle next day. He had been ailing for the past three months, 'feeling the weight of his years', but the good lady noted that 'his eye was as bright and his glance as keen and piercing as ever', and she commented in her Journal: 'His laugh is the most enjoyable and heartiest I ever heard.'

This particular Saturday, however, he was not in high spirits, feeling deeply the loss of Forster, who, he told her, had had constructed a special reading-chair for him. On June 23, she found him again inclined to be sad and dispirited, but she took him out for a drive, and 'once started, the air revived him, and he talked well and willingly.'

She mentioned that she had been asked to meet John Bright, but had not been able to, and asked how Carlyle liked him.

'Not very much,' he replied, saying he thought him rather contentious, and 'as for that party, Bright, Cobden and Co., "Cheap and Nasty" was their watchword. It was folly to suppose good things were to be had cheap. The nation had been deluded.'

His niece Mary related how once he said he would like to be in Parliament just to ask for a return of parsnips which John Bright had buttered!

On June 26, Mrs. Anstruther was at Cheyne Row again, to report that she had seen Tom Taylor of *Punch*, to whom Carlyle had given her an introduction. Taylor had been 'very civil', but the candid lady pronounced him a humbug, and declared she could get no truth out of him, to which Carlyle agreed, or seemed to agree.

'I am sorry to hear from your niece that you don't care for George Eliot's writings,' Mrs. Anstruther went on.

'Oh, I never read novels,' he replied. 'I once read *Adam Bede*, having been asked to do so by a friend, and to give my opinion as to the authorship, then unknown. And at the very beginning of the book, there is a description of a carpenter making a door, and the writer makes the door and panels all in one. And I said, "This book is

by a lady, and I doubt it will not be very accurate if it sets out in this way." No, her writing is wordy, watery. I read a poem of hers, *Jubal*, but that is mere sound. One of the best things she ever wrote,' he added, 'was a review of Young, of *Night Thoughts*.'

Mrs. Anstruther was very anxious to have him visit her at Old Ballikinrain, her home near the Lake of Menteith, although he was very much afraid of the long journey. However, her persuasions, and perhaps those of others, prevailed, and in due course he and his niece arrived on July 10, having come from Dumfries to Kilmarnock, where Mrs. Anstruther met them. 'He rather liked the motion of the train,' she recorded. They succeeded in crossing Glasgow without any fuss, and had a cup of tea at Queen Street Station, Carlyle entirely oblivious of the staring crowd there.

She found him an appreciative, as well as a singularly observant guest, remarking how strange it was that he should be here in her house, although two years before they had been totally unknown to each other. 'But I felt such confidence in you,' he added, 'that I resolved to take the journey. There is not another house in the kingdom to which I would have gone.'

Mrs. Anstruther had promised him perfect quiet, and achieved it by 'threatening away all the bores' of her acquaintance, and by 'preventing the papers getting hold of his name'. A few enthusiastic admirers did manage to find their way to Old Ballikinrain, but he behaved very well, except that he would not utter a word if a stranger was present who he thought had come uninvited to see him.

The only visitors were her own immediate family, her father Sheriff Anderson from Kilmarnock and her sisters 'in relays'. Carlyle and the Sheriff, whose uncle, Rev. Charles Anderson of Closeburn, had married Carlyle and his wife, enjoyed long talks together, smoking and discussing books and pleasant personalities.

On arrival, Carlyle had looked round the drawing-room, and pronounced it with approval a 'rational looking room'. There were many other instances of his alertness and interest. He observed 'everything about the place'. The little dog Patch he nicknamed the 'Centre of the Universe', and another time called him 'a little unconscious Atheist', as he was playing about on the grass in the sunshine.

The adjoining 'Castle' of Mr. Orr-Ewing, which was

burned in 1913, irritated him. 'Castle Danger', he called it, 'that monument of perversity, take me away from it,' and again: 'that castle of distraction on the hill.' It has been described as 'an imitation Balmoral', and was certainly too flamboyant for its surroundings, so that to Carlyle it may well have been an eyesore.

He went out for a walk and smoke every morning before breakfast, and it was then, tête-à-tête, that Mrs. Anstruther found him at his best. Once he spoke sadly of the existing state of affairs, inveighing as before against the chicanery and corruption everywhere apparent, in repeated bankruptcies and other phenomena of the time.

'Ah,' he remarked, 'it is discouraging to leave the world very much as one found it. Except that I have given my testimony against all that, I may say that I have done nothing.'

Erskine of Linlathen he declared to be the last Christian man he had known, and he went on to speak of the extraordinary change in belief that had come about since he was a young man. 'It is impossible to have it back,' he concluded.

Another day, walking in the avenue of Old Ballikinrain, he spoke of his wife's death, and of the misery and anguish he had suffered then. 'Time is the only healer. I never found any other consoler.' He recalled his mother's death too, and told Mrs. Anstruther that his own early death was a thing to be desired, since he 'wished to be at rest, he could no longer work, he was of no more use.'

When one of Mrs. Anstruther's sisters came visiting, she brought her white pony Donald, and Carlyle went riding with it next day. It was fleet of foot, and delighted him, but it was evident that the exercise was more than he was fit for, so the watchful ladies contrived to prevent a repetition. He never mounted a horse again.

Marianne put the nimble little beast in the pony cart, and drove Carlyle about on Sundays, and occasionally on other days, to rest the two chestnuts, that he had noticed were beautifully matched and almost identical. Another of the sisters brought her tame fox with her from Ayrshire, and won a good deal of his attention for her unusual pet.

They found that he could take unlimited 'driving exercise, as fast as possible, along the roughest roads,' and accordingly they were out a great deal. The house stood on Endrick Water, which runs into the eastern corner of Loch Lomond,

eight or nine miles away, and one day they drove down to the Loch to go boating to Inch Caillach, one of the larger islands. 'The boatman Sandy was away at the fishing,' the hostess reported, 'so we got the loan of the Macintosh's man, Robert, and a boy. Robert was a very poor rower, and handled the oar as if he were afraid of it. Mr. Carlyle soon noticed this, and said of him, as Talleyrand had said to some envoy,—“Surtout, point de zèle!”'

It was characteristic that the remark, intended to amuse his hostess, was made in a language that the boatman could not understand, and so would not resent.

Driving about, he had to be told the name of every place they passed. A small farm near the house which had always a very untidy appearance he christened 'slut farm'.

He appreciated the coachman, Adams, whose skill in finding his way about London he had admired before. He found him a very 'shifty' man, on account of the ease with which he could jump on or off the box, and procure a glass of water for him when required. They went out daily, never less than twenty miles, often much more, and saw, besides Loch Lomond, Loch Ard, the Lake of Menteith, Stirling, and the field of Bannockburn, where he 'reconstituted the battle in the most vigorous and inspiring language'—the most remarkable utterance they had listened to.

One day, he thought Mrs. Anstruther looked cold and tired from the twenty-six miles' drive, and said, solicitously: 'You might say as Alexander said to the Athenians,—“Oh, Athenians, what trouble I take for you!”' He was constantly regretting the trouble he gave, saying, 'Oh, what a useless creature I am! Here I have fallen into your pitying hands.'

At breakfast one morning, he mentioned the Prince of Wales, who was very popular, and whom he considered a well-disposed man, and very polite. Just before he had left London, the Prince had sent a message through H. B. Frere to say he was coming to call on Carlyle at Cheyne Row, and would like to meet Mr. Froude, but for some reason—the illness of one or the other, probably of Carlyle—the visit did not take place.

Mrs. Anstruther spoke one evening of a new railway in China, the first there, and Carlyle recalled the first to be built in this country. 'That was the beginning of all the extraordinary changes we have seen,' he said, 'the uproot-

ing, the overturns, which have made this world quite a foreign object to an elderly person.'

At another dinner-hour, they talked of the poets.

'How do you like Cowper?' he asked.

'Only middling,' his hostess replied, 'better than Wordsworth, but then I don't like Wordsworth at all.' He seemed inclined to praise Cowper, but abandoned him, and turned instead to the source of much of his real enjoyment in these last years: 'These words of Shakespeare in *The Tempest* I think are the finest that have ever been written,—

We are such stuff  
As dreams are made on, and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep.

'I wish to leave my testimony,' he finished, 'that these words sum all Shakespeare.'

He often talked of his early years, and spoke of Edward Irving with great affection. On the day he left Ballikinrain, Mrs. Anstruther accompanied him to Glasgow, to go to the Cathedral and see Irving's tomb. Thereafter Carlyle went on to Dumfries, and at Kilmarnock, where the train stopped on the way, he saw Sheriff Anderson again and four fair daughters, waiting to see him pass, and invite him to visit Ayrshire and them. He had never seen Burns's birthplace, and admitted he gladly would do so, promising that he might yet come back to Ayrshire some time. He hoped that either Dumfries or a doctor there might help his sleeplessness, which had been very bad for some time again, and had been a considerable vexation to him at Old Ballikinrain. Meanwhile, one of the Misses Anderson had smuggled a living present to Miss Aitken in the shape of a puppy called Bumble, but her father had detected the stowaway, and it was sent home again as too young to travel in such company. Girls will be girls.

They were not without hope of seeing him again when the train moved away, but felt the likelihood small, he seemed so frail; and in fact he never returned, never saw the little cottage where Burns was born, much as he would have enjoyed the sight.

On August 5, after he reached Dumfries, he sent his hostess a complete set of his works, with an inscription in his own handwriting, sadly shaky now. Later he sent her other books, among them *Rahel* by Mrs. Jennings, and Mrs. Montagu's Letters, and she succeeded in finding the criticism

of Young in the *Westminster Review* for 1857 which Carlyle had praised as the best thing Mrs. Lewis (George Eliot) had done—an article entitled “Worldliness and Other-Worldliness.”

## VII

## THE UNSPEAKABLE TURK

(1876)

IN the autumn of this year, Russia was on the brink of battle with Turkey, and Britain was in danger of repeating the folly of the Crimean War. The Queen desired it,<sup>1</sup> and Disraeli, the Jewish Press and high finance, the Jingoës and Society did all they could.

‘At the Lord Mayor’s feast in November, the Prime Minister used menacing language.’<sup>2</sup> He ‘never looked so strange as when he was buttoned to the chin in his official uniform of blue and gold, with his artificially-darkened hair framing the deadly pallor of his mask-like face. When the applause which in the city of London always greets the toast of a Tory Government had died down, the Dictator rose and faced the audience. He folded his arms over his chest, and spoke with a deliberation which, though his voice was low, made every word tell.’<sup>3</sup>

‘The policy of England, he said, was peace, but no country was so well prepared for war as ours. If England were to enter into a righteous war, her resources were inexhaustible. “She is not a country that, when she enters into a campaign, has to ask herself whether she can support a second or a third campaign. She enters into a campaign which she will not terminate till right is done.”’ This was a hardly veiled threat to Russia, it was encouragement to Turkey, it was incitement to a war party in Great Britain. ‘The provocation offered by Mr. Disraeli at the Guildhall,’ wrote Mr. Gladstone, ‘is almost incredible. Some new lights about his Judaic feeling in which he is both consistent and conscientious have come in upon me.’<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Queen Victoria*, by Lytton Strachey, pp. 261-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Gladstone*, by John Morley, II, p. 558, corroborated by fuller reports.

<sup>3</sup> *Sketches and Snapshots*, by G. W. E. Russell, p. 481.

'Conscientious' he was perhaps in a political sense, so far as a common politician can be conscientious; and maybe some similar Jewish prejudice inherited from her mother may have been blended with megalomania in the mind of the old Queen. The danger of war was the penalty the country paid for leaving such matters in such hands; happily it was let off with the fright. The 'Bulgarian horrors' gave conscience and common sense a hearing, and made even the man in the street see the absurdity of Disraeli's truculent assumption that we should be right to go to war with Russia for the sake of the Turks.

To James Macdonnell of *The Times* Carlyle 'poured out his soul' about the Eastern Question and Disraeli in particular, saying, 'He is a cursed old Jew, not worth his weight in cold bacon.'<sup>4</sup> When George Howard and others appealed to him for a letter, he wrote, in November. He took the right side with emphasis, and went further than Gladstone. Reprinted many times, his letter was a counterblast to Disraeli, and enriched the current journalese by a new adjective:

'For fifty years my clear belief about the Russians has been that they are a good and even a noble element in Europe. Ever since Peter the Great's appearance among them, they have been in steady process of development.

'Twenty years ago we already had a mad war in defence of the Turk; a mass of the most hideous and tragic stupidity, mismanagement and disaster (in spite of bravest fighting).

'It seems to me that something very different from war on his behalf is what the Turk now pressingly needs from England and from all the world, namely, to be peremptorily informed that we can stand no more of his attempts to govern in Europe, and that he must for ever quit this side of the Hellespont, and give up his arrogant ideas of governing anybody but himself.

'The peaceful Mongol inhabitants would, of course, be left in peace, but the governing Turk, with all his Pashas and Bashi-Bazooks, should at once be ordered to disappear from Europe and never to return.

'Nor in the temper of the Czar and of the Austrian Emperor need the fair partition of these recovered territories be a cause of quarrel. To England there is one vital interest, and one only, that of securing its road to India, which depends on Egypt and the Suez Canal.

<sup>4</sup> *The Star*, 22.2.1890.



'The Unspeakable Turk should be immediately struck out of the question, and the country left to honest European guidance; delaying which can be profitable or agreeable only to gamblers on the Stock Exchange, but distressing and unprofitable to all other men.'<sup>5</sup>

Gladstone appeared an extremist and had been alone as yet among political leaders in going so far as to say that the Turks should be turned 'bag and baggage' out of Bulgaria. When the greatest living historian went further, and said they should be evicted from Europe, plainly intimating that the fate of Constantinople was no business of England, he rendered a great service to the commonweal, but incurred the hatred of hosts of self-seekers. The immediate effect may be seen in a leading article of the time: 'The appearance of Thomas Carlyle as a guide in Eastern politics is almost as great and as pleasurable a surprise as if the apostle Paul were suddenly to rise from the dead and advise our countrymen as to the county franchise.'

In December, the comely Madame Novikoff came to see him, her friend Tyndall having arranged for her reception<sup>6</sup>; and soon 'the M.P. for Russia', as her enemies called her, was a favourite at Cheyne Row, and never was better pleased than when he came to see her at her hotel. 'To me,' she has written,<sup>7</sup> he 'showed only the lovable and affectionate side of his nature. He was a dear old man, and I loved nothing better than to see opposite to me his rugged old face, and hear his broad Scots accent.'

She well deserved his esteem. She had shown herself a genuine yet modern angel of peace; for the task she had come to attempt with a woman's vehemence was to prevent a war between her country and England. The death in battle on the Serbian side of her heroic brother Nicholas Kiréeff had done more than any other single event to stir up her countrymen to deliver fellow-Christians from the pitiless Turks, and a feeling akin to Joan of Arc's inspired her to come and do what she could. Disraeli sneered and Jingoism howled; but Gladstone kept half the ambassadors in London waiting while he escorted her to her hotel from the St. James's Hall Conference in November, 1886, and it was Carlyle, she says, who first suggested to

<sup>5</sup> For full text of the letter, here abridged, see *Thomas Carlyle*, by H. J. Nicoll, pp. 228-31, and contemporary newspaper files.

<sup>6</sup> *M.P. for Russia*, by W. T. Stead, I, pp. 281 and 310.

<sup>7</sup> *Russian Memories*, by Madame Novikoff, pp. 80-4 and 163.

her to collect her newspaper articles into a book, *Is Russia Wrong?* and promised his support.

'But who will write a Preface?' she was anxious to know. 'Will you do so?'

Carlyle shook his head dolefully, and, glancing at his shaking right hand, replied: 'I could not, I am too old, but here is a young man'—and he looked at Froude, who was with him. 'He can do it.'

Accordingly Froude wrote the Preface for her, and her book came out and mingled in the hell-broth of the witches' cauldron of public opinion, which it helped to hinder from boiling over and causing an explosion of war.

## VIII

### VARIOUS 'BUS JOURNEYS

(1876-77)

ON September 20, Lecky had taken a 'long omnibus and walking expedition' with Carlyle, who seemed very well, and was 'deep in Swift', and very well pleased with some books Lecky had procured for him about Swift. He had also 'been just having a long visit from the Lord Mayor.'<sup>1</sup>

Those omnibus outings soon became almost a normal part of Carlyle's daily life, when he was not being driven out by friends and was not strong enough to walk, or wished to escape from the rain.

Mitford accompanied him on one of these excursions, which he called his 'drive'. They took the 'bus in King's Road and went as far as the Bank and back. It was at the time of the Bulgarian atrocities, when Gladstone was 'goading the country into fury'.

'There's that Disraeli or Beaconsfield, or whatever he chooses to call himself,' Carlyle exclaimed, as they sat in the 'bus. 'He thinks himself the wisest man on earth, and he's just the foolishhest thing that crawls upon the face of it!' He went on to revile the Tory Government and the Unspeakable Turk 'to make one's hair stand on end', while the other passengers 'listened in open-mouthed

<sup>1</sup> *Memoir of W. E. H. Lecky*, by his Wife, p. 113.

amazement'. But the conductors all knew him, and did not mind.<sup>2</sup>

The humour of the situation, of course, arose from the fact, of which Carlyle was ignorant, that the horrified Mitford beside him owed to Disraeli the fat billet which made him happy in London. Perhaps no one knew until he wrote his *Memories* in old age how evenly his gratitude was divided between Disraeli, the giver of the good thing, and a lucky black opal bought a few days before he received the gracious letter heralding his appointment. But enough was mysteriously whispered in fashionable circles to cause a run on black opals.<sup>3</sup>

A lady who must have been young in 1877 wrote to a relative in Scotland that year from London, telling of an incident that had impressed her, and would interest her correspondent: 'You know that Mrs. Scott lives in Chelsea, and so does your friend Thomas Carlyle. We were coming down Regent Street, and got into a 'bus at Piccadilly, when a queer-looking old gentleman, with a stick in one hand and two books in the other, came in and seated himself opposite me. Mrs. Scott whispered that it was Carlyle. Of course, I sat and stared at him the whole time.

'He sat leaning forward on his stick. He is tallish, stoops a little at the shoulders, and looks very *gruff*. When the 'bus stopped, and we were going out, he stepped down first and then turned and held out his hand and assisted us down the steps. So I have had the honour of touching Carlyle's hand. He hadn't gloves, and I was sorry I had. However, I will preserve the glove, and perhaps allow you to touch it one day. I came to the conclusion that, although he *looks grumpy*, he is a perfect gentleman.'<sup>4</sup>

Lord Rosebery once remarked to David Masson, 'I only saw Carlyle once and never spoke to him. I just saw him entering a 'bus.'

'Running?' Masson asked.

'Yes, running.'

The London 'buses were then horse-drawn, and stopped whenever a passenger wished to alight or enter. Conductors were continually begging people to be quick, especially in entering, to minimise the strain on the horses. If they did not require to stop altogether, and could consequently

<sup>2</sup> *Memories of Lord Redesdale*, II, p. 650.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 640-2.

<sup>4</sup> Letter signed W. O. S., dated Edinburgh 29.10.1927, in *The Scotsman*.

avoid the labour of getting under way again, their lot was made much easier. Carlyle, Masson noticed, invariably ran on entering.<sup>5</sup>

The consideration he always showed for animals was strikingly illustrated on another occasion, when he was walking arm-in-arm with Browning, who angrily maintained to Sidney Colvin<sup>6</sup> that 'Carlyle was the most intensely, sensitively tender-hearted of men.' A butcher-boy drove past them savagely flogging his horse, and Browning felt Carlyle shake from head to foot in a spasm of angry indignation.

## IX

## ANCIENT BUILDINGS

(1877)

WILLIAM DE MORGAN, famous as a novelist in old age, author of *Joseph Vance*, &c., but at the moment well known as an artist-potter, and busy erecting a kiln in the back garden of the house his mother had taken near Carlyle's, was passing one day when he noticed that the kitchen chimney of Number Five was on fire. He entered without ceremony, and overcame the fire so swiftly and expertly that no damage was done, and he was able to slip out without a word, hoping that his intrusion had not been observed and intending to say nothing about such a trifle to either Carlyle or his niece. However, Mary happened to be looking out of an upstairs window, saw him, and made enquiries, and so the affair came to light.

In 1877, William Morris was busy founding his 'Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings', and recalled that de Morgan was a neighbour, and his mother a friend, of Carlyle's. Accordingly he begged him to 'secure the coveted name of Carlyle as a member of the new association', and he 'set about it conscientiously but with trepidation', Mary assisting him, by delivering the prospectus in advance, to break the ground, and fixing the most auspicious time for his argument in support of it.

<sup>5</sup> Told to D. A. W. by David Masson.

<sup>6</sup> *Memories and Notes of Persons and Places*, by Sir Sidney Colvin, p. 81.

When he was ushered in, he found the tall omniscient lawyer Sir James FitzJames Stephen already there, and Carlyle apparently in no mood for joining anything. Carlyle heard what he had to say, then passed him on to Stephen, with the advice: 'Better make *him* a convert first.' However, Stephen declined to be converted, roundly declaring that the owners or guardians of ancient buildings had a far greater interest than anyone else in preserving them, and could be relied upon to do so. De Morgan's reply was to quote the case of Wren's churches and the Ecclesiastical Commission, which evoked from Carlyle a panegyric of Wren, a really great man 'of extraordinary patience with fools'.

He promised to think over de Morgan's proposal, chiefly, the young man fancied, because Sir James had said so much against it.

Next day Miss Aitken told him that her uncle was 'wavering', and suggested that a letter from Morris himself 'might have a good effect'; so Morris obliged with a judicious screed to de Morgan: 'If you are seeing Mr. Carlyle I think you might point out to him that it is not only artists or students of art that we are appealing to, but all thoughtful people in general. For the rest it seems to me not so much a question whether we are to have old buildings or not, as whether they are to be old or sham old; at the lowest I want to make people see that it would be better to *wait* while architecture and the arts in general are in their present experimental condition before doing what can never be undone, and *may* at least be ruinous to what it intends to conserve.'

Next day a letter came from Carlyle to the society, accepting membership. 'It made special allusion to Wren,' de Morgan says, 'and spoke of his city churches as *marvellous works, the like of which we shall never see again.*'

Morris, who loathed Wren and all his works, took the first opportunity of reading this welcome letter in public, to the great delight of his intimates, who must have enjoyed hearing from his lips this generous praise of his pet aversion.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Life of William Morris*, by J. W. Mackail, I, pp. 338-46; *Threescore-Years-and-Ten*, by Mrs. de Morgan, pp. 226-44; and *William de Morgan and his Wife*, by A. M. W. Stirling, pp. 111-13, 36, 81, 107, &c.

## X

## HELPING TO HINDER WAR

(1877)

AS matters progressed to the inevitable crisis between Turkey and Russia, Britain was split into rival camps headed by Disraeli and Gladstone. To the Prime Minister, Russia was a constant menace, threatening India and the route to India *via* the Suez Canal, in which by skilful measures he had obtained a strong interest on behalf of Britain; besides, he feared that if he refused to go to the help of the Sultan, the head of the Mohammedan religion, he would give serious, and dangerous, offence to Mohammedan India. But he entirely underestimated the force of the growing national spirit among the Balkan peoples, and failed to see that his objective, keeping Russia in check, could be far more satisfactorily attained by splitting up European Turkey into a number of independent and self-contained states who would be jealous of any attempt on the part of Russia to encroach upon their autonomy.

Gladstone appreciated that salient fact, and seized upon the Bulgarian atrocities to rouse his countrymen, proclaiming that 'five millions of Bulgarians, cowed and beaten down to the ground, hardly venturing to look upwards, even to their Father in heaven, have extended their hands to you.'

Now, since Disraeli had refused to allow Britain to join the Concert of Europe for the settlement of the problem, Russia felt compelled to tackle it alone, going to war with Turkey to save her Christian cousins in the Balkans from untold horrors and possible extirpation.

'Dizzy wants a war,' Carlyle told Allingham on May 16, 'to show himself like a second Chatham.'

Gladstone had given notice of resolutions, put down for debate on May 7, to the effect that Turkey had no claim to help from us; but official Liberals, led by helpless Hartington, were not supporting him, and he was expected to have only a few Radicals behind him in the lobby. Happily, however, there still were men in the cabinet wiser than Disraeli, and one of them, either Lord Derby or Lord Carnarvon—it is not known which—caused cer-

tain information to reach Carlyle, upon which he acted promptly. On May 5 *The Times* published a letter received from him :

‘ A rumour everywhere prevails that our miraculous Premier, in spite of the Queen’s Proclamation of Neutrality, intends, under cover of “ care for British interests ”, to send the English fleet to the Baltic, or do some other feat which shall compel Russia to declare war against England. Latterly the rumour has shifted from the Baltic and become still more sinister, on the eastern side of the scene, where a feat is contemplated that will force not Russia only, but all Europe, to declare war against us. *This latter I have come to know as an indisputable fact* ; in our present affairs and outlooks surely a grave one.

‘ As to “ British interests ”, there is none visible or conceivable to me, except taking strict charge of our route to India by Suez and Egypt ; and, for the rest, resolutely steering altogether clear of any copartnery with the Turk in regard to this or any other “ British interest ” whatever. It should be felt by England as a real ignominy to be connected with such a Turk at all. Nay, if we still had, as in fact all ought to have, a wish to save him from perdition and annihilation in God’s world, the one future for him that has any hope in it is even now that of being conquered by the Russians, and gradually schooled and drilled into peaceable attempt at learning to be himself governed. The newspaper outcry against Russia is no more respectable to me than the howling of Bedlam, proceeding, as it does, from the deepest ignorance, egoism, and paltry national jealousy.

‘ *These things I write not on hearsay, but on accurate knowledge*, and to all friends of their country will recommend immediate attention to them while there is yet time, lest in a few weeks the maddest and most criminal thing which a British Government could do should be done, and all Europe kindle into flames of war.’

The historian, Green, was assured at the time that what Carlyle meant was a plan of Disraeli’s to occupy Constantinople.<sup>1</sup> This had been guessed in the House and crystallised opinion. Liberals rallied to Gladstone. A cabinet meeting was called at once, and in the debate that followed the Government undertook to keep the peace.

<sup>1</sup> *Letters of J. R. Green*, edited by Leslie Stephen, letter of 7.5.1877 to Miss Stopford.

'This,' says a historian of the time,<sup>2</sup> 'was the policy of Lord Derby. It was not the policy of Lord Beaconsfield.' No, indeed! As Carlyle remarked in the house of Erasmus Darwin: 'Dizzy was on the point of sending a fleet to Constantinople. I wrote a letter in the newspapers. It was no merit in me. The information was given me from unquestionable authority, and his scheme was blown up as by a torpedo! He thought of bringing me before the House of Commons to be questioned as to my authority; but I was very easy about this, as I understood from a competent adviser that I had nothing to do but say, "I will not tell you."' <sup>3</sup>

As for Gladstone, he was equally pleased and puzzled. Ruskin had told him too at breakfast about this time, 'I ought by rights to have been in favour of the Turks and against the Bulgarians, for I am against all resistance to authority. But then, I must follow my great father, Carlyle.'

Gladstone enquired of Morley, 'How is it that Carlyle is anti-Jingo?'

'It is a genuine historical judgment,' Morley answered. 'But what had he to do with the Turks?'

'Oh, in his *Frederick*, he has been brought pretty close to Eastern affairs: Russia, Poland, Turkey.'<sup>4</sup>

It is most probable that the secret whose publication had so much immediate effect reached Carlyle through Lady Derby, an admirer and friend, while Froude was glad to be useful to divert suspicion from her by adopting the air of, 'I could an if I would', and ostentatiously avoiding questions, even leaving London for a few days for that purpose, so that it was believed that the secret had come through him from Lord Carnarvon.

Carnarvon, who stood in the cabinet with Derby steady for peace, was handsomely silent, and Disraeli was left guessing. 'Lady Derby was a remarkable woman,' wrote Mrs. Lecky.<sup>5</sup> Keenly interested in science, art, literature, politics, with originality and insight, she shared her husband's 'simple unworldly tastes', and 'neither of them had any social ambitions.' Although bound of course to do hospitality, they 'kept clear of all the idols of modern

<sup>2</sup> *History of Modern England*, by Herbert Paul, IV, p. 28, &c.

<sup>3</sup> *William Allingham, A Diary*, p. 263.

<sup>4</sup> *Recollections of John Viscount Morley*, I, p. 292.

<sup>5</sup> *Memoir of W. E. H. Lecky*, by his Wife, p. 89.



society, and there was an old-world atmosphere about them which had a great charm.'

Derby resigned from the cabinet shortly after Disraeli took the decisive step of threatening Russia with instant war and bringing Indian troops to Malta to prove that his intentions were in earnest.

## XI

## LEGROS' PORTRAIT

(1877)

LEGROS the portrait painter had for some time been eager to try his hand at Carlyle, but hesitated to apply to him direct. So learning his habits from Chelsea neighbours, he took up his position one afternoon to watch the house, and saw him going out for a short walk, by King's Road, back to the river front, then past his own house.

Legros approached him, thinking that a good look or two would suffice for an etching; but Carlyle, who was known to be generally absorbed in thought while he walked, could also be acutely observant, and Legros was uncomfortably aware that his scrutiny had not passed unnoticed.

The painter hurried round for a second view, and again they came face to face. This time there was no mistake about it—Carlyle opened his eyes rather wide and plainly recognised Legros. The third time they met, not many minutes later, he frowned and paused, rapping his stick on the pavement.

The Master of the Slade School took the hint, waylaid him no more, and went home and did his etching, which he aptly called *Carlyle Passant*. He gave a copy to Miss Aitken, with an explanation, and she later commissioned him to do a full portrait. In March this year the obliging Greek merchant Dilberoglue acted as honest broker, and Legros undertook the commission for a fee of £150.<sup>1</sup> During the five or six sittings that followed, he told the story of his etching, and he and Carlyle had a pleasant laugh together over it. But his first impression of the sitter's face was never entirely removed, and the portrait, now in the Scottish

<sup>1</sup> The date is fixed by a letter of Dilberoglue, 5.3.1877.

National Portrait Gallery, can best be understood in the light of the angry stare of enquiry that was turned on him in the Chelsea streets.

Miss Aitken was pleased, and the portrait, one of the most striking, with some austerity and the introspection that its painter thought an essential characteristic of the subject, hung in the house in Cheyne Row until Carlyle's death.

A mezzotint and medallion by Legros were done about the same time.

## XII

### FANNY KEMBLE AND STUART REID DROP IN (1877)

FANNY KEMBLE was nearly seventy now—sixty-eight, to be arithmetical—and as ever a worshipper of Shakespeare, and a woman of kind impulses. This year, she came to Chelsea to see a sick friend, and as she told in a letter to an intimate<sup>1</sup>: 'From there I went on to Carlyle, who lives in their neighbourhood, and who is now considerably over eighty years old, and has lately been ill. He is pleased to be visited by his friends and acquaintances, and I sat with him an hour, and sang him the Scotch ballad of Leezie Lindsay'—a kindness that he would deeply appreciate. 'He was very eloquent, and very severe in his denunciations of our present government, and far from cheerful in his prognostications of the future of England.'

Stuart J. Reid was another welcome caller, and reports, completing the history of their unconventional acquaintance, begun in March of the previous year, that 'by his own gracious act' Carlyle enabled him to see him alone at his own house, when they 'talked through a beautiful May afternoon in 1877.'

Carlyle apparently was interested at the time in the work of Moody and Sankey, the American evangelists, expressing the hope that 'their attempt to touch the multitude to spiritual issues might not miss other and more abiding success than the mere verbal homage of the crowd.' He

<sup>1</sup> *Further Records*, by F. A. Kemble, II, pp. 81-2.

went on to speak with swift scorn of the Brompton Oratory services, in which Cardinal Manning was the chief offender, a man for ever 'play-acting with the Almighty.'

He told how his own doubts were started by the Song of Solomon, and praised Goethe, but for whom he too would have 'pistolled his way through' religious perplexities.

The arrival of Froude interrupted the conversation, and Reid immediately rose to go. Carlyle, however, stopped him, and introduced him to the new-comer, telling him to sit down again, after which, of course, the talk could only be general. When Reid eventually took his leave, Carlyle accompanied him out of the room, and gave him 'with utmost gentle sympathy some final words of cheer.'

'I felt, as I left his door,' Reid tells, 'that he too, as he said of another'—Goethe—'had "reared his inward home by slow and laborious efforts, and that his peace sprang not from blindness, but from clear vision, not from uncertain, but from sure insight into what cannot alter."' As long as I live, I shall cherish the memory and remember the words and even the gesture and tone of that old man.'

### XIII

#### MRS. ANSTRUTHER AND TWO ARTISTS

(1877)

IN June, Mrs. Anstruther was back in London, and wasted no time in going to Cheyne Row. Carlyle she found 'very well and looking better than last year'. He was on the point of going out for a walk with Froude, 'a plain, elderly man' whom he introduced. A few days later when she called, Carlyle was in the back garden, sitting in an 'odd-looking wicker chair some admirer had sent him from Holland', talking with a Mr. Graham, an Irish metaphysician. Mrs. Anstruther took Carlyle out for a drive to Kew Gardens, and on subsequent days they had many drives together, to Richmond Park, Wimbledon Common, Ham Common, and other places where they could leave the carriage and enjoy the fresh air and the view.

One day Carlyle was 'in great spirits', and spoke a good deal about Gibbon, whose *Decline and Fall* he had been re-reading for the first time since his youth. On June 24

he told Allingham: 'I find it entirely below my expectations, the style is laboriously antithetical—and he doesn't lay out his history well; there are many chapters where a mere tabular arrangement ought to have sufficed. I should have liked him also to hang out more frequent general elucidations in the way of dates. On the whole, it is very disappointing.'<sup>1</sup>

Allingham reminded him that Gibbon was one of the authors whom he had strongly recommended him to read many years before. 'Gibbon is always worth meeting,' he had said. To which Carlyle now replied: 'Oh, one must read Gibbon to get any insight into this wild history of mankind.'

He talked too of John Sterling to Mrs. Anstruther, and went on to say that he did not think the present state of things could endure much longer, with people professing belief in incredible creeds. He felt very sorry for 'the clergy, poor fellows'; and as he had said over and over again, 'there is no use and no hope in believing or attempting to believe a lie.'

During another drive, he told her about Bulwer Lytton and his wife, how they had married for love, but it had turned out to be not 'the true sort', and they had quarrelled and been bitterly unhappy. She published a novel, satirising many people, among whom her husband was included. He tried to have her removed to a Lunatic Asylum, persuading two men, doctors or attorneys, to swear to her insanity, whereupon she applied to Carlyle, and he announced that if necessary he would go in person and swear to her *sanity*. Lord Lytton took fright, and his wife was thereafter permitted to go in peace with an allowance, and was, Carlyle thought, still alive.

He talked a good deal about Forster, of whom he had been very fond, although he had never had a great opinion of his literary ability, and found him too prone to hero-worship. The *Life of Dickens* had been something of a disappointment in some ways, perhaps because of the unsatisfactory way in which it left so much of the matter of Dickens's estrangement from his wife in the air, without clearing it up properly. The unfinished *Swift* had not attained to great heights either, although Forster had shown himself the first seriously and genuinely to enquire into the real truth of Swift's life.

'Far better done than I expected,' he had written to Dr.

<sup>1</sup> *William Allingham, A Diary*, p. 256.

John Carlyle of the *Life of Dickens*, 'and indeed the whole book may be said to be (by the help of those incessant letters from Dickens himself) a wonderful autobiography of Dickens, leaving him conspicuous to mankind for as many years and generations as they are pleased to remember him at all.'

On the drive to Richmond and Ham Common, Carlyle cross-questioned a carter about some steps over the park wall made by George III, but without eliciting any information. Then they walked in the churchyard, and Carlyle quoted once again his favourite passages from *The Tempest*, perhaps moved to do so by his surroundings, and the sound of the bell tolling for a funeral.

At Cheyne Row, Mrs. Anstruther also met Allingham, 'a quiet, pleasant man', and Fortescue Harrison, to whom she was introduced as a 'Scotch lady for whom I have a great regard'.

At Froude's urgent request, Millais had undertaken a portrait of Carlyle, and it was thought to be progressing very well when one day Mrs. Anstruther and Mary drove to the studio to meet Carlyle and take him for a drive. Unfortunately, he had just left, but Mary sent up her card, requesting permission to see the picture. The house was 'very grand', with a 'marble hall and staircase, etc.—fountain of a seal with fish in mouth, by Boehm.' Millais was in his shirt sleeves, a 'handsome, spoiled puppy.' He willingly displayed the portrait, and seemed to Mrs. Anstruther to be demanding by his manner unqualified praise. 'That of course was quite out of my power to give,' she says. 'The picture was in Millais' usual style,—hard, clever, forcible painting. The outline, the features, all correctly given, and with great power of brush. But merely the mask; no soul, no spirit behind. I said it looked modern, and in fact I did not like it. This roused Millais, but I told him all depended on the standard one took, and that, for my part, I took Titian, and maintained the beautiful portrait in the Pitti in Florence, a young man, "l'innominato", as about the finest type of what a portrait should be. Millais had the audacity to say,—"Titian could not paint a portrait!" And said Sir Joshua was far better. But I said, "Oh, no, he was a mere sketcher compared to Titian."'

From which it will be gathered that Mrs. Anstruther did not receive a very favourable impression of the great painter, who in turn did not receive a very favourable impression of

the candid Scots lady. The result was unfortunate. Carlyle reported to her later that since that day Millais had allowed none of his friends to see it, said he was working at it, and wanted some more sittings, or indeed to start it afresh and do it all over again. 'It used to be said,' a commentator writes,<sup>2</sup> 'so an artist friend of Millais told me, that the cooling of the painter's ardour was due to the disparaging remarks of a lady who came with Carlyle to Millais' studio to see the picture.' So Mrs. Anstruther had, unwittingly, much to answer for. Carlyle gave the extra sittings, but the painting was never finished, and may be seen in its incomplete state in the National Portrait Gallery.

'The picture does not please many,' Carlyle said of it, 'nor, in fact, myself altogether, but it is surely strikingly like in every feature, and the fundamental condition was that Millais should paint what he was able to see.'

Millais, who was said to boast of making £30,000 a year, taking four months' holiday,<sup>3</sup> used to tell a story of Carlyle during those sittings. After he 'had had him twice', Carlyle turned round upon him on the 'great and glorious' staircase of his house and asked,—'Millais, did painting do all that?'

'Yes, painting did it all.'

'Well, there must be more *fools* in this world than I had thought!'

Another day, Carlyle took Mrs. Anstruther to Boehm's studio. 'A pleasant unaffected man, the Boehm, and a good workman, as sculptors go. . . . Mr. Carlyle did one unkind thing unintentionally. High up round Boehm's studio were placed plaster casts of the Elgin marbles, the frieze of the Parthenon. Mr. Carlyle stopped before these, looked up to them and said, in a moralising and enquiring manner: "Can you tell me what it is wherein consists the wonderful charm of these ancient marbles?" Boehm smiled and shook his head.'

The 'unkindness' was in Mrs. Anstruther's imagination. Carlyle had never before expressed much admiration for the Elgin marbles; but seeing them there he no doubt thought the sculptor must admire them, and his enquiry was at the least mere politeness, without any savour of disparagement for modernity. Millais did indeed depreciate the old and boast of the superiority of the new, but Boehm,

<sup>2</sup> *Bibliography of Thomas Carlyle*, by Isaac Watson Dyer, p. 551.

<sup>3</sup> *Autobiography and Letters of Mrs. Oliphant*, p. 274.

however much he may have felt his work could stand comparison, had never done so.

Mrs. Anstruther left London at the end of July, Carlyle protesting that she ought to live there more, and in August she records the receipt of a brochure by a Frenchman 'extremely French' on current topics and ultramontane intrigues to drag England into war with Russia for the benefit of the Pope. 'All the enemies of liberty in the world must be anxious to see England take the false step of challenging Russia at the Bosphorus.'

## XIV

## ALTHAUS CALLS

(1877)

ONE afternoon towards the end of July, Friedrich Althaus, who had not seen Carlyle for seven years, although letters had passed between them, came calling again. As he waited for Carlyle, who was finishing a letter, he noticed a volume of Robertson's *History of Scotland* standing open on the arm of Carlyle's chair.<sup>1</sup>

When the old man came into the room, he stood in the doorway for a moment, giving his visitor a searching look, then advanced and shook hands, pulled up the window, and sat down, all the same as ten years before. His step was as quick and he seemed as spry—even, with his back to the light, younger if anything, although the visitor presently began to realise the change in him. He stooped, and his hand trembled as he raised the window; but beard and hair were still far from being pure white, and the most remarkable sign of surviving youth was that he still had all his teeth, as Althaus assured Germany, a 'rare thing at that age'. The miracle is easily explained. The teeth were all there—the witness was conscientious—but they were artificial.<sup>2</sup>

Carlyle plied the visitor with questions of his movements and welfare. At mention of Mirow near Mecklenburg there was merry talk about the tailor Duke, uncle of the wife of our George III, which led on to George himself, whom Carlyle

<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Althaus in *Unsere Zeit* of Leipzig, 1881, No. 6, pp. 848–52.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to D. A. W. from Alex. Carlyle, 27.10.1918.

praised for his library, now in the British Museum, 'the King's Library, I know it well. It is one of the best I know. Nothing in it of that extravagant trash one finds so often in big libraries collected by individuals, but the whole chosen by the mind of a man whom I'd call a man of sense. It has been of more use to me than all the rest of the Museum. It was there I found the plan of Versailles which enabled me to understand the Insurrection of Women.'

In collecting the Library, at any rate, the King 'knew what he wanted and chose the right tools to carry out his will.'

Althaus mentioned that the popular edition of Carlyle's works had been selling well, 'especially *Sartor*,' which brought from Carlyle the admission, 'The book has somehow or other caught the mind of the people.' He had never a very high opinion of that early achievement, although he once defended it rather whimsically, when he was told that old Sandy Corrie, who had been a school friend, had felt himself in duty bound to read something of Carlyle's, and, getting hold of *Sartor*, set himself down to the task. A nephew of the author's dropped in to see him, and Corrie said, confidentially: 'But, John, I read it through, and I read it up and down, and I read it every way. But I maun just tell ye, honestly, I could make neither head nor tail o't.' When the nephew repeated this criticism, his uncle, shaking with laughter, cried: 'Well, John, I must confess to you, I wasn't just thinking of Sandy Corrie when I wrote *Sartor Resartus*!'<sup>3</sup>

Talking with Althaus now, he dismissed the topic, so that his visitor guessed he was not much concerned about the fate of his books, and he declared earnestly: 'What I have always said to them is, "Pack up your lies as quick as you can and put them away from you for ever. If you don't do that and behave accordingly, you'll be simply dirt in mind and heart."''

This seems to have turned the talk on politics, and America in particular, Carlyle unrepentant of having cursed the Civil War. 'No nation in the world at present,' he ended by saying, 'has a leader they can follow except the Germans—they have Bismarck.'

Althaus reported what he had been writing, and was delighted with some praise of the *Conversations Lexicon* to

<sup>3</sup> Reported to D. W. M. by Rev. Dr. Adam W. Fergusson, of Dundee, who had it from the nephew in question,



which he had been contributing. They went on to discuss philosophy, and Hegel in particular, and his 'secret', Carlyle quoting Goethe's words: "'How far forward have you brought the matter?'"—"I never thought about thinking." But he gave the quotation 'in German with gusto and a capital accent':

"Wie hast du's nur so weit gebracht?"

"Ich habe nie uber das denken gedacht."

'Do the Germans still concern themselves about Goethe?' he went on to ask. 'Any new books about him?'

In 1870 this question had nonplussed Althaus, but now he was ready, named the new books and told Carlyle to keep his mind at ease,—'Goethe stands as high as ever in Germany.'

When Althaus had been with Carlyle an hour, Miss Aitken entered to remind her uncle of his walk, suggesting to the visitor: 'Perhaps you might go with him?' While Carlyle was preparing to go out, his niece chatted with Althaus, who spoke to her of the old man's hearty laughter.

'We often say he curses the world as the Germans sing the *Lorelei*,' Miss Aitken replied, adding: 'He makes no new acquaintances now, but sees old friends oftener than ever.'

Carlyle stooped a great deal when he went out walking with Althaus, but his pace was as fast as ever. They followed the same route as they had taken ten years before, and crossing a flood of traffic in King's Road Althaus offered an arm which the old man gladly took, and so they went by quiet streets to Fulham Road. There they boarded a 'bus for Portland Place, Althaus endeavouring in vain to persuade him into a hansom. He chose the corner seat by the door, and although it was a ramshackle 'bus, he seemed content, and the conversation continued through all the roar of the traffic. Althaus talked of his work in University College, and of his native Lippe, Count Wilhelm who drilled the Portuguese, and the fortress Wilhelmstein, and so on. He reports proudly that Carlyle enquired how far it was from here to that part of Lippe—as if he had a hankering to go and see it.'

In Regent Street, Althaus drew his attention to a full-length portrait of Lord Beaconsfield which was on exhibition,—'“Our miraculous Premier”—I believe your phrase will stick to the noble Lord,' Which drew from Carlyle a hearty

laugh, and a word or two of scorn blended with pity. In Regent Circus they separated with a hearty handshake and good wishes on both sides, and saw each other no more.

## XV

## A WOULD-BE BLACKMAILER

(1877)

FREDERICK MARTIN, the clerk who had stolen many of Carlyle's papers, was still hungrily waiting for his death to profit by the plunder. His connection with Carlyle had been a recommendation which brought him work, and for some years past he had been comparatively prosperous, his *Statesman's Year-Book* selling well<sup>1</sup>; but whatever he had, it was never enough—he was reputed to be 'generally drunk and always needy'<sup>2</sup>; so he went to Ecclefechan and there discovered a young teetotal lecturer, John T. Wells, a native of the village, whose kindred had known Carlyle's for generations, and whose hero-worship and rare opportunities made him a living encyclopædia of all that the neighbourhood knew about Carlyle. Co-evals and even a nonagenarian elder who had known him as a boy and was now his pensioner, the daughter of the very midwife who had brought him into the world, neighbours and farm servants—Wells knew all they had to tell, and gladly welcomed the 'trusted German secretary' of the great man, who had worked beside him, and could show as confidential evidence of the esteem of his 'dear old master' unpublished private papers he had 'given him'.

'He was too poor to pay me enough,' was in effect the nearest approach to finding fault that the ex-clerk allowed himself. 'But these papers you know will be worth a lot. Wasn't it good of him?'

Assured that the master would be pleased, and promised a large payment in addition, Wells set to work with enthusiasm, and soon sent to Martin in London the best history he could compile of the early life of their hero, with drawings and notes. As soon as Martin had got as much as he could

<sup>1</sup> *Literary Recollection of F. Espinasse*, pp. 260-3; confirmed and augmented by David Masson, J. T. Wells, and others, to D. A. W.

<sup>2</sup> J. T. Wells.

give, he ceased to reply to his letters, and never paid him a penny, nor returned him a scrap of his papers.

Thus it was that in June this year there was on sale in London, and selling well, the *Biographical Magazine*, Volume I, Number I. It had no cover, no name of publisher or printer, author or editor, and consisted of only one long article: *Thomas Carlyle: A Biography, with Biographical Notes*. The last page ended with:

(*To be Continued*)

Every word of the text was the writing of Wells, and its four woodcuts were from his drawings; but he was innocent of what made Carlyle wroth at sight of it, the promise of autobiographical notes. He never suspected the papers Martin had were stolen, and the theft indeed was not discovered by anyone until long afterwards. Carlyle without enquiry knew that he himself had nothing to do with a publication that purported to have his support, and he interviewed the 'respectable bookseller' who was selling it wholesale, and who admitted he was acting for Frederick Martin.

'He says he doesn't care what you say. He'll get others to sell for him if I don't. Nothing shall stop him. He'll go on in spite of you and call it what he likes. How can I stop him? How can he be stopped?'

It was a smart attempt at blackmail. A criminal prosecution was impossible, the theft of papers being as yet unknown; the only choice appeared to be a civil suit, with expense and scandal, or to let Martin go on and make a good deal of money out of it, or to pay him a lump sum for silence. To Espinasse and others Martin had always complained that Carlyle did not pay him enough, and in his fuddled conscience it is likely he excused himself by the thought: 'I'll get payment for all my work out of him one way or the other.' He had no misgivings for the moment; the theft remained hidden.

Carlyle was in his eighty-second year, but vigorous yet; Martin was a feeble creature, and not always sober.

'Stopped it must and shall be,' Carlyle declared. 'I am old, but I am equal to the like of Martin yet. I know where to find him—I see him often as I go about. He must stop this at once or I'll punish him.'

'How can he be stopped?' reiterated the astonished man of trade.

'There are many ways of stopping him,' the old man retorted, flourishing his big oak stick. 'There's clanking of crowns, there's tweaking of noses, pulling of beards, and kicking of seats of honour. Stopped he must and shall be.'

This was no bluff. A very few hours later a message of submission came to Cheyne Row, and the newspapers immediately published a letter from Martin, announcing that 'Mr. Carlyle had seen with displeasure what I had written', and the *Biographical Magazine* had no second number.

'Mr. Frederick Martin has no authority to concern himself with my life, of which he knows nothing,' wrote Carlyle to the *Athenæum*.

Acquaintances wondered why Martin had stopped publication. He could not have been influenced by the threat of a thrashing; the publicity of it would have been good for business, and no doubt he could have sustained the painful ordeal with equanimity with that comfort in mind; but perhaps he reflected on the awful danger of the theft of papers being discovered, if Wells should communicate with Carlyle. Besides, he was now begging from his fellow Jew, the Premier, a pension to assist him with his *Statesman's Year-Book*, so handy for politicians in the House. The hope of such a reward would evaporate if Carlyle had to chastise him for attempting blackmail, to say nothing of police courts hearing of his theft. And in the end, there may have lingered some trace of the gratitude he had once felt for his dear master.

Wells lamented the loss of his labour, and was little consoled to see in Froude's biography six years later many a paragraph obviously procured from what he had compiled. Doubtless Froude purchased it from Martin; he 're-wrote the most of it,' Wells said, 'and would not know that Martin never paid me.'<sup>3</sup>

Martin presently received a pension, and drowned his disappointments in deeper potations. Unfortunately, however, he seems to have revenged himself by persuading Froude to accept as true certain innuendoes which were later to besmirch the pages of Froude's biography. In addition, the manner in which he was stopped by Carlyle from attempting what seemed a fraud on the public was erroneously supposed to indicate that Carlyle had already chosen a biographer, a thing which he never did. Modesty

<sup>3</sup> Alex. Carlyle told D. A. W. that he heard the story of Martin during his uncle's lifetime, and asked him, and was assured that it was true.

it mainly was that prevented David Masson and Sir Charles Gavan Duffy from attempting a *Life of Carlyle* in the spirit and style of Boswell ; they waited in vain for any sign that he wished it.<sup>4</sup> Moncure Conway, William Allingham, Francis Espinasse and many others hesitated and desisted also. But it was natural that Froude, to whom had been consigned the task of editing the letters and Reminiscences, &c., should come to believe the duty of writing a biography imposed upon him.

## XVI

## W. T. STEAD IS INTRODUCED

(1877)

PERHAPS the most remarkable editor in England this year was one of the youngest, William Thomas Stead, still under thirty, and editing the *Northern Echo* at Darlington. For several years he had been the leading champion of Russia in the English press.<sup>1</sup> He came to London in October, on hearing from the historian Freeman that Madame Novikoff, whom Beaconsfield called 'the M.P. for Russia', had mentioned that she would greatly like to make his acquaintance.

'From the day we met in Symond's Hotel, in October, 1877,' he wrote thirty years after, 'we worked together with our utmost energy, in the cause of peace and fairplay.'

It was a critical time indeed, for Beaconsfield, backed by a majority in the Commons, was still bent on war to save the Turks. As Gladstone told the Duke of Argyle<sup>2</sup>: 'I have a strong suspicion that Dizzy's crypto-Judaism has had to do with his policy. The Jews of the east *bitterly* hate the Christians, who have not always used them well. Disraeli may be willing to risk his government for his Judaic feeling, the deepest and truest, now that his wife has gone, in his whole mind.' Of course he was seeking to take advantage of the permanent danger to peace, the natural pugnacity of the people, which always tempts politicians in need of votes.

<sup>4</sup> Both said so to D. A. W.

<sup>1</sup> *Life of W. T. Stead*, by F. Whyte, I, pp. 44-50, and II, p. 122.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Gladstone*, by John Morley, II, pp. 552-3.

One Sunday afternoon, Stead was agreeably startled when Madame Novikoff calmly proposed that she should take him to see Carlyle, with whom she was in the habit of driving out often in Lady Ashburton's carriage on week-days, and in the Chelsea omnibus on Sundays.

'At first I almost shrank from so great an honour,' Stead wrote.<sup>3</sup> He was perhaps one of the sincerest of the hero-worshippers, to whom Carlyle appeared almost as a god, impossible of approach. Stead was that *rara avis*, a journalist with a strong sense of duty, and indifference to material benefit, and in Carlyle he found the most heartening inspiration. However, once having realised that Madame Novikoff was quite in earnest, he set out with her eagerly, and presently they were shown into the upstairs room in Cheyne Row where Carlyle was in the habit of receiving his friends. Stead noticed the 'comfortable leather-covered Voltairean armchair with a reading desk fixed to the left arm', which John Forster had presented to Carlyle on his eightieth birthday. On the desk lay open an old French work in rusty leather, the life of one of the monks of the Thebaid (Upper Egypt).<sup>4</sup> There was also a bronze paper-weight on the writing table, a présent from Charles Dickens, representing a boy swinging on a gate with his books on the ground, and on the pedestal the legend: *Au Diable les leçons!* Most of the pictures on the walls were portraits, one of which was of Friedrich as a boy playing with his sister, the gift of Lady Ashburton.

When Carlyle appeared, Stead noticed particularly the brilliant blue of his eyes, the ruddy cheeks, the erect carriage, and the brow which 'although high and wrinkled bore upon it none of that weight of consuming care that oppresses you in his portraits. The plough-shares of sorrow have passed over it but the furrows do not show, and the expression is more that of benignant placid innocence than that which sits on the grief-scarred features of his photographs.' The abundant white-grey hair was 'as thick as if the silvered locks belonged to the young Carlyle of forty years since.'

'The infinite sadness which I had believed ever brooded over the face of the author of *Sartor Resartus*,' Stead goes

<sup>3</sup> Notes by W. T. Stead, MSS. kindly lent to D. A. W. by his daughter, Miss Estelle Stead. See also *The M.P. for Russia*, by W. T. Stead, I, pp. v, 383, &c., and II, p. 87. See also *My Father*, by Estelle Stead, pp. 72-7.

<sup>4</sup> See Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Chapter XXI.

on, 'was not there. In its stead there was nothing but kindly mirth and ready sympathy.'

'Glad to see you,' Carlyle greeted Madame Novikoff, who introduced the young editor of the *Northern Echo*.

'The Editor of the *Northern Echo*!' Carlyle repeated. 'I see that paper occasionally. I got one only the other day, with a letter marked in it from a Russian gentleman about the war.'

'Why do you take me for a gentleman?' Madame Novikoff cried. 'That is too bad. I was the writer of that letter.' Carlyle laughed his apologies. It was Madame Novikoff who had been sending him the *Northern Echo*, and he had expressed his admiration for its courageous editor, and mentioned that he would like to meet him.

When they talked of the war, and the regretful situation that had rendered it necessary, Carlyle exclaimed, with animation: 'When the Powers were gathered together at Constantinople'—in December, 1876—'they should have acted as one man and told the Turks that they had long since been *de trop* and compelled them to get out of that.' The last phrase was 'uttered with peculiar emphasis and followed by a chuckle of laughter'.

'But it was not done,' he added sadly. 'And Russia has to do it herself.'

Madame Novikoff explained how deeply the attitude of England, as proclaimed by Beaconsfield, had been resented in Russia, but Carlyle insisted that the great mass of the people, except in London, were firmly determined to have no war on behalf of the Turks.

'It is fifty years since I saw no good could come out of the Turks,' he went on. 'It was being discussed then whether it would not be better to put the Russians in their places, it was said that the Russians at all events were a civilising Power and would at any rate improve, while the Turks were nothing but an utterly corrupt set of scoundrels and irreclaimable savages as bad as the Red Indians. It made a great impression on my mind then and I have never seen any occasion to change my opinion since. But,' he added, breaking off and addressing Madame Novikoff, 'your men seem to be strangely in want of a good general.'

The lady made a spirited defence of her countrymen, pointing out the lack of men, which resulted naturally from a lack of means of feeding a larger force, but Carlyle was not satisfied.

'You see you do not seem to have much of a plan of campaign,' he declared. 'You commence in Armenia and then you begin in Bulgaria. You get across the Balkans and then instead of pressing boldly on Constantinople you go and break your army to pieces on Plevna. Why could you not have left Plevna alone? But perhaps you dare not do that! Well, I think if you had had a good general, a Turenne or a Frederick the Second, or a Munnich, I think you would have utterly upset them long before now and driven them to the place whither they are fast hastening which I need not more particularly specify!'

As the winter wore on, it was plainer every week that Russia was to conquer Turkey, Plevna was about to surrender and Erzerum was being invested when, on the 'last Monday in November' (26.11.77), Stead decided to consult Carlyle again, and has written<sup>3</sup>:

'I had heard through Grenfell that Lord Beaconsfield was this week going to do something, if he could carry the Cabinet with him, when Erzerum fell or surrendered.' He accordingly went to Cheyne Row, shortly after two o'clock, and was ushered into the upstairs room where Carlyle sat reading a life of Edward III.

'How d'ye do,' he greeted the visitor. 'I am very glad to see you.'

Stead explained the origin of his call, and asked if Carlyle had any news. He had not, nor had he recently seen Froude. 'But,' he said, 'Froude has frequently been telling me that that is his game. That he was hoping that when the Turk began to give in then he would be able to come to the rescue and save him from his doom. Yes,' he continued, with some emotion, his eyes 'glittering with fire', 'that has been Beaconsfield's idea from the first, to array this country in arms against Russia,—the damnablest course that ever was suggested to the English nation in the whole of its history. The man was a mountebank from the beginning, a mere charlatan who would employ the strength of England to save the Turk. Sir, the Turk is on the edge of Hell. None but God Almighty can save him!'

Stead reminded him of 'God Almighty and his boots' an anecdote in *Frederick the Great*, Book XXI, Chapter III. In March, 1769, there was war between the Russians and the Turks, and the Russian commander, Prince Galitzin, 'made a rush on Choczim, the first Turk Fort beyond the



Dniester, and altogether failed,—not by Turk prowess, but by his own purblind mal-arrangements ;—which occasioned mighty grumbling in Russia.’ In the spring of 1769, there was a ‘bit of Russian satire’ on Galitzin’s incompetence, ‘a small Manuscript, which was then circulating fresh and new in Russian Society ; and has since gone over all the world (though mostly in an uncertain condition, in old Jest-Books and the like), as a genuine bit of *caviare* from those Northern parts :

‘*Manuscript circulating in Russian Society.* Galitzin, much grieved about Choczim, could not sleep ; and, wandering about in his tent, overheard one night, a common soldier recounting his dream to the sentry outside the door.

“A curious dream,” said the soldier : “I dreamt I was in a battle ; that I got my head cut off ; that I died ; and, of course, went to Heaven. I knocked at the door : Peter came with a bunch of Keys ; and made such rattling that he awoke God ; who started up in haste, asking, ‘What is the matter ?’ ‘Why,’ says Peter, ‘there is a great War on earth between the Russians and the Turks.’ ‘And who commands my Russians ?’ said the Supreme Being. ‘Count Munnich,’ answered Peter. ‘Very well ; I may go to sleep again !’—But this was not the end of my dream,” continued the soldier ; “I fell asleep and dreamt again, the very same as before, except that the War was not Count Munnich’s, but the one we are now in. Accordingly, when God asked, ‘Who commands my Russians ?’ Peter answered, ‘Prince Galitzin.’ ‘Galitzin ? Then get me my boots !’ said the (Russian) Supreme Being.”

Carlyle smiled on being reminded of this, then went on : ‘Yes, nor do I see why they (the Russians) should stop till they make an utter end. The Turk has lain there for four centuries and more without doing a single good thing for the world or for the lands he laid himself down upon. He has been a curse and nothing but a curse. There are scarcely any roads throughout all his Empire. They are dropping to bits. And there are hardly any railroads. He has never been anything but a destroyer from the first to the last. The only good thing he ever did was to destroy the Lower Empire. They were a bad lot of men these Greeks, not much better than the Turks, with the lawyer-like intellect wrangling and discussing until the Turk came and swept them away. That was the only service the Turk ever did. Since then he has been a curse and a scourge to

the lands he overran, and now his hour has come and I don't see why Beaconsfield or anyone else should save him from his doom. It's sheer downright Bedlamism, but he will not be able to carry the country with him. Mr. Froude tells me he thinks of a general election and an appeal to the country in support of war with Russia. But there are a great many of his own party who would oppose him. There is the Earl of Sandwich, a strict old Tory, who always speaks of the war party as one to which he is opposed, and they tell me there are many others like him. It seems to me that if Beaconsfield has his way he will ruin his party, and Gladstone and his friends will come in. But I have no means of judging about these things.'

Stead asked him what ought to be done, and if he were right in raising the standard of revolt, young editor as he was. 'Every English citizen,' Carlyle replied, 'is bound to prevent so great a crime, by every means in his power.'

Madame Novikoff arrived at this moment, having been informed that there was only 'a gentleman present from a place called Northern Echo'. Carlyle welcomed her warmly, and thanked her for her letters. He congratulated her upon her little natural touches, so Stead read to him about the Duke of Cambridge, at which he laughed heartily.

'Ay, ay,' he said, 'and Lord Beaconsfield has such a good army, such magnificent soldiers, and so many that he must go to war. But he cannot do much after all. He saw he might hold Constantinople but he cannot take the field against the Germans.' There was 'a bitter tone of scorn in the old man's voice whenever he referred to the English Army' that startled the reporter; but this was not the first time Carlyle had inveighed against the inefficiency of our standing army, which had remained almost identically as it had been in Napoleon's time, and was in need of radical reformation. 'There, for instance,' he went on, 'is Sir Garnet Wolseley, one of the foremost fighting men and accomplished Generals in our service, who, Mr. Froude tells me, is longing for war, not because he loves the Turk but solely that he may have an opportunity of displaying his skill with his weapons.'

Lecky came presently, 'tall, rather soppy looking, large vacant eyes, light hair, awkward demeanour, and bashful appearance, more like a tallow chandler than a best man'.

'Have you heard the awful news that this gentleman from the *Northern Echo* has been telling us,' Carlyle asked

him, 'that Beaconsfield thinks his hour has come for playing his last card and that he must "intervene" to save the Turk from destruction? The maddest and most criminal piece of folly. And yet it may be a just retribution for our having ever permitted such a man to have power and position among us. But he must be stopped. You should see some of the St. James's Hall people. If the news is true we must have another, what was it they called it——' He referred to the 'Conference' of December 12, 1876. Madame Novikoff reminded him that he and Lecky were conveners, but he disclaimed that, with a smile: 'I was not a convener, I only wrote a letter. Mr. Howard is out of the country just now.'

Lecky mentioned a rumour in the *Standard* that England was to do something, but he understood it had been admitted to be false. When he rose to go, Stead was warmly grateful: 'Thanks, Mr. Carlyle, for your advice. I am afraid I have taken a very great liberty.'

'No, no,' he replied, 'I am always glad to see you when you have such news as you bring to-day.'

'Then,' replied Stead, 'in case Beaconsfield goes on and there is need for a St. James's Hall protest, you will write another letter.'

'Oh, well,' he said, 'we will see, we will see.'

He went downstairs with Madame Novikoff, to see her off, begging her to come again soon, and 'looking so grandfatherly that if he had kissed her when he said good-bye it would have been most appropriate.' He came out on to the doorstep to bid them *au revoir*, watching them affectionately out of sight.

## XVII

## IN BATTERSEA PARK

(1877)

ONE Sunday, November 25, Carlyle went walking over the river towards Battersea Park, with two companions. One was Sir James FitzJames Stephen, the lawyer, who was at the moment hopeful of codifying all the laws of England, but was doomed for the bench before long, had he but known it. The other was Mitford of *Old Japan*,

described by one who saw him as 'a quick-eyed, good-looking, semi-American old young man',—aged forty, to be exact. To Mitford's eyes, Carlyle, 'in his long brown coat and soft hat, slouching along swiftly, stick in hand, with his peculiar shuffling gait', appeared 'a figure that might have stepped out of a picture by Raeburn, a thing of the past with a nobility which was all its own. . . . His face was a picture of hale old age with its ruddy cheeks streaked like a russet apple, and his strong white hair and crisp beard.' Everybody thereabouts, he added, knew him, and 'everybody was proud of him'. Allingham affords an interesting sidelight on this, for one day when he and Carlyle were about to cross the road a hansom cab drove up, and Carlyle stepped back to allow it to pass. The cabby however reined in his horse, and with a gesture of his whip cried: 'All right, Mr. Carlyle!' and held his horse until the old man was safely across.

Allingham went to Cheyne Row on the day of the walk to Battersea Park, but did not reach the house until after Carlyle had gone out. He hurried to the end of the New Bridge and asked the Toll-man: 'Seen Mr. Carlyle?'

'Yes,—gone round the other bridge with two gentlemen,' he was told, and so hastened to intercept them. In a few minutes he joined them in Battersea Park, and heard Mitford talking 'very fluently and well on China and Japan'. However, it was not to listen to this that Allingham had come after them; but there was nothing else—Carlyle was listening, not speaking; and Allingham had to endure with what patience he could the manifold details of a nobleman's suicide by order, and how the Japanese were trying the languages and systems of England and France, Germany and Holland.<sup>1</sup> Carlyle, never tired of learning from authorities, enjoyed Mitford's descriptions of Japan and the Japanese.

On the following Thursday, Allingham was again with Carlyle, and found him very weary and depressed.

'I am unwilling to live longer—but must be patient,' he declared. 'Mary is planning a horse and carriage (which) might help me. But nothing can give me any satisfaction at this date I have arrived at; and in any case, as he might have pointed out, he had never thought it worth while to have a carriage of his own after his wife's death, for it had

<sup>1</sup> *Memories of Lord Redesdale* (A. B. F. Mitford), II, p. 654; and *William Allingham, A Diary*, p. 259.

seemed impossible that he should live to enjoy it for any length of time. 'But I am better off than many a one,' he added to Allingham. 'I am free of an irritability of nerves that tortured me a year ago. Things hurt me and rankled in me, I know not at all why. The recollection, for instance, of some man I knew forty years ago perhaps—often some one I had but the slightest acquaintance with, or only knew by eye—would suddenly, without any reason at all, come into my mind, and prick into me in the most painful manner. That is all over now.'

Nobody apparently noticed this torture of the nerves at the time, or would ever have known of it had he not mentioned it in this way afterwards, when thankful to be rid of it.

Allingham noticed that he was as fond as Byron of a passionate stanza of Burns—of which Scott used to say that these few words contained 'the essence of a thousand love-tales'—and sometimes quoted it :

Had we never loved sae kindly,  
Had we never loved sae blindly,  
Never met, and never parted,  
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

## XVIII

### LORD RONALD GOWER REPORTS

(1877-78)

AT the Academy Exhibition in 1876 a sculptor, thirty-one years of age, Lord Ronald Gower, had been introduced to Carlyle by Miss Davenport Bromley. He afterwards stated<sup>1</sup> that the old man 'looked wonderfully hale and hearty for fourscore; his cheeks as ruddy as those of a boy.' On September 12, 1877, Carlyle was brought by Mrs. Greville in a carriage to Grosvenor House to see Gower's statue of Marie Antoinette, and the happy sculptor reports :

'Carlyle was in good spirits and talked much, but somewhat indistinctly. He appeared interested in the statue, and made allusion to the Queen's shoe, which she repaired herself when in prison,' and he went on to give other instances of her 'heroic conduct', after which 'we drove

<sup>1</sup> *My Reminiscences*, by Lord Ronald Gower, II, pp. 129-30, 157-8, and 175-6.

back together to Carlyle's house at Chelsea, where he showed us his portraits of Frederick the Great, also those of Martin Luther's parents. Of these he is very proud. Carlyle was full of cordiality and good humour; his natural and inborn courtesy is marked, insisting, for instance, on escorting Mrs. Greville back to her carriage and seeing her drive from his house, standing with his good gray head uncovered in the street. It is impossible not to feel an attachment for him, combined with veneration.'

Tyndall mentions a similar mark of attention to his guests: 'I see him now,' he wrote in a letter to *The Times* on May 3, 1881,<sup>2</sup> 'standing bare-headed in his sober dressing-gown on the pavement below his doorsteps, with the sun shining on his gray hairs, saying the last kind and courteous words to a lady whom his three and eighty years did not prevent him from conducting downstairs.'

Before long, on February 8 next year, Gower was calling again at Carlyle's house with Mrs. Greville, and gave him his reduced statuette in silvered bronze of the Marie Antoinette. 'He seemed pleased with it,' he recorded, 'patted and caressed it, and placed it in the centre of his chimney-piece. He spoke with intense bitterness of Lord Beaconsfield, and called him "that melancholy harlequin"'. Of the Pope (just dead) he said,—"At length he is out of this troublesome world"; and of Popery he said, "It is the greatest humbug in the Universe."'

Gower was soon to go globe-trotting, and returned with Mrs. Greville for another last look five days later, on February 13. 'We found Carlyle as usual seated in front of the fire. He referred several times to the little statuette on the chimney-piece that faced him, and told me that Tennyson and others of his friends had liked it. He read us two chapters in his *History of the French Revolution*—those on the death of Mirabeau and on the Queen's trial and execution. Nothing could be simpler than the surroundings, but withal nothing more impressive than to see and hear this "old man eloquent" read aloud those stirring chapters in that poetic prose, as he sat in his long-robed dressing-gown, his hands folded before him. Behind him on the walls hung portraits, Cromwell, Frederick, his sister the clever Margravine, and near them Luther's parents.'

Lecky had been agreeably surprised this January to find

<sup>2</sup> From Mr. Oscar Gridley's Cuttings.

Carlyle much pleased with his new *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, and proudly reported that he had read it all<sup>3</sup>; which made the weekly visits to Cheyne Row all the more pleasant. When he said in March that in the first six or seven weeks more than a thousand copies were sold, Carlyle told him that his own *French Revolution* did not go to a second edition until the third year, although the first edition was only a thousand copies.

Ruskin was another regular visitor at Cheyne Row, coming up from Oxford on Saturdays, arriving generally punctually at two o'clock. He had also been visiting Gladstone, and liking him well—too well, he feared. He felt uneasy, asking himself aloud: 'How am I to explain it to "the master" at Chelsea?' Happily Mrs. Gladstone's nephew, Alfred Lyttleton, renowned for nothing worse than cricketing as yet, was begging to be presented to Carlyle, and Ruskin brought him.

Asked by the cricketer, 'Do you know the reason of the gulf ever between Macaulay and Carlyle?' Ruskin replied, 'Macaulay expressed the convictions of a party only, while Carlyle spoke world-truths;' which was rather puzzling to Lyttleton, who wrote, however, on January 21 to his cousin Mary Gladstone, giving her a very good description of the day's adventures.

He and Ruskin were shown into 'a pretty room' hung with pictures, among which the 'only sign of militarism' was a portrait of Frederick as a child, beating a drum. 'Carlyle came down in a few minutes,' he reported. 'He looked very infirm and his hand trembled excessively, while at first he groaned and sighed a good deal, receiving kindly enough, however, Ruskin's kiss, most tenderly given,—and tolerated from no other man, perhaps, but this Frenchified Puritan. It is a custom which inevitably repels the Scots temperament.

'He greeted me civilly,' continued the cricketer. 'His face was far finer than his pictures had led me to hope. Pathos was the most abiding characteristic.' Speaking of the portrait in the London Gallery, Ruskin afterwards said to Lyttleton: 'Millais may represent the pathos of a moment, not of a life-time.'

Five or ten minutes passed in talk of the heat, and the fatigue of a recent drive to the East End, and the ill effects of 'a great drench of champagne' his niece had given him.

<sup>3</sup> *Memoir of W. E. H. Lecky*, by his Wife, pp. 121, 127-8.

Ruskin led the conversation round to Burns, of whom Carlyle said that one of his odes was 'worth an eternity of these poets', including our Patmore, who had been mentioned rather contemptuously as 'one who wrote poems on cathedrals and cathedral closes'.

Ruskin made a happy quotation from Burns, 'about a girl simulating sleep in order to get a kiss from her lover'; which was perhaps *Blooming Nelly*, an old English song rewritten by Burns for the *Museum*: 'On a bank of flowers, on a summer day . . . with love and sleep oppressed', she shut her eyes honestly enough, and when kissed she was startled broad awake, and fled. 'But Willie followed, as he should', and all was well. There may have been some fun missed by the cricketer in this contrast between these children of nature and the works of Patmore.

Lyttleton goes on: 'It was delightful to see the brilliant smile and to hear the rough loud laugh' with which Carlyle responded. 'The smile lit up his rugged old face wonderfully and banished utterly the look of pathos.'

As for current politics, he said: 'A profoundly uninteresting controversy this was between Russia and Turkey'; and we can imagine with what gusto Mary Gladstone's cousin reported to her that he heard Carlyle declare Disraeli 'an accursed being, the worst man that ever lives, if lies are sin; who with all the strength of his cunning has tried to get this country into war and for the Turk.'<sup>4</sup>

## XIX

### BAYARD TAYLOR REVISITS CARLYLE

(1878)

IN 1877 President Hayes had deserved well of his country and agreeably surprised Bayard Taylor by making him the American Ambassador to Germany, 'assuring him that he should be given every furtherance in the work he was known to have on hand, the *Life of Goethe*.' So early in 1878 the new Ambassador was in London on his way to Berlin, and asked Moncure Conway to take him to Carlyle, explaining: 'I met him many years ago and wish to see him again, but am not sure I'll be remembered.'

<sup>4</sup> *Some Hawarden Letters* (1878-1913), pp. 13-17; and Mrs. Alfred Lyttleton's *Life* of her husband.



On the way, he mentioned to Conway<sup>1</sup> that when he first met Carlyle, the old man set a trap for him. 'I told him that I was gathering materials for a life of Goethe. Carlyle said,—“ But are there not already Lives of Goethe? There is Lewes's *Life of Goethe*. What fault have you to find with that? ”' The tone seemed to suggest that Lewes had exhausted the subject. Taylor 'began pointing out errors here and there in the biography', and Carlyle interrupted him 'with a ringing laugh', and cried: 'I couldn't read it through.' From that moment, Taylor continued, Carlyle knew that he was searching his subject seriously, and was cordial.

Now they found Carlyle in the early afternoon, alone and reading, and he received them cordially and seemed more animated than usual. He presently recalled Taylor's previous visit, and 'congratulated him that he belonged to a country which preferred to be represented abroad by scholars and thinkers rather than by professional diplomats. He at once enquired how he was getting on with his *Life of Goethe*,' saying: 'Such a work is needed.'

'Bayard told him,' Conway continues, 'of a number of new documents of importance which the Germans had entrusted to him. The two at once . . . discussed minutely problems in the private life of Goethe.'

The Ambassador's solution of 'a point made by a German writer' was quite simply that 'the said writer lied', a judgment which he pronounced in a 'dramatically gentle tone', to which Carlyle responded with a hearty laugh, warmly agreeing with him.

Referring to Taylor's translation of *Faust*, he remarked, with a good-natured smile: 'Yours is the twentieth translation of that book which their authors have been kind enough to place on my shelves. You have grappled, I see, with the second part. My belief increasingly has been that when Goethe got through with his *Faust*, he found himself in possession of a vast quantity of classical and mediæval lore, demonology and what not; it was what he somewhere called his Walpurgis Sack, which he might some day empty; and it all got emptied, in his artistic way, in Part II. Such is my present impression.'

The brougham was announced, Carlyle must drive; but he was plainly sorry to terminate the interview, and Conway

<sup>1</sup> *Thomas Carlyle*, by Moncure D. Conway, pp. 103-5, and his *Autobiography*, II, pp. 285-7, here combined.

'never forgot the solemnity' of his farewell. He was speaking of Goethe, and Conway believed he was thinking of his own death near at hand, as he concluded by repeating the opening verses of the Masons' song :

The future hides in it  
Gladness and sorrow. . . .

'His voice trembled a little when he came to the lines :

Stars silent rest o'er us,  
Graves under us, silent.'

'No voice from either of these directions,' he said with a sigh. Taylor then 'took up the strain, and in warm, earnest tones repeated the remaining verses in his perfect German. Carlyle was profoundly moved. He grasped Taylor's hand, and said, "Shall I see you again?"' The other answered that he must immediately leave England, but hoped to return before long.' He was only fifty-three and seemed as strong in body as in mind, and had promised Max Müller and others to visit Oxford next year. 'Before long' was his phrase to Carlyle, who then entered his carriage, but suddenly made the driver halt and beckoned them to come near. To Taylor he said : 'I hope you will do your best in Berlin to save us from further war in Europe.'

Then followed a moment's silence ; war between England and Russia seemed imminent then. Carlyle broke the earnest silence with a final farewell : 'Let us shake hands once more ; we are not likely to meet again. I wish you all success and happiness.'

The unexpected happened. Whether or not Bayard Taylor had any hand in helping the peace-making Bismarck, peace was kept, in spite of the war-mongers in England ; but before the end of the year Taylor died, so that there could no longer be another discussion of Carlyle's hero.

## XX

### RELIGION IN SCOTLAND AND OTHER MATTERS

(1878)

AT the end of March Mrs. Anstruther was back in London, and called at Cheyne Row at noon on the day after her arrival. She found Carlyle just finished a belated breakfast, and looking very well indeed, although

somewhat depressed, weighed down by the feeling that he was of no further use in the world and should have departed from it.

It was a relief that the danger of war seemed to have been definitely averted, although affairs generally were in a chaotic state, which, however, was nothing new. 'Religious affairs in Scotland seem to be in a bad way, too,' he added, referring to a sketch Mrs. Anstruther had sent him: 'They have taken awa' the standards, and taken awa' Hell, and there's little left to preach about: ' which had amused him very much.

'I have nothing to do with these people who come to me and say they are atheists,' he declared later. 'I am tired of that kind of talk. . . . I think of what Fichte said' (probably Kant was named): "'I see the starry firmament above me, and I am aware of a sense of right and wrong in man.'" He went on to speak of the changes taking place in every department of the structure of society: 'The French Revolution began a still greater. A stone was set rolling then which is gathering force still.' He murmured some German words, of which his visitor remembered only these lines from Goethe:

Hatt' Er mir anders gewünscht,  
So hatt' Er mich anders gemacht.

If He had wished me different,  
He would have made me so.

Mrs. Anstruther mentioned that she was on her way to Spain, at which he remarked: 'Ah, at one time I had a great desire to see countries and places famous in history. I can even remember when I was reading the description of any places, I would feel quite melancholy and say, "Ah, poor —, I shall never see you."'

In May Mrs. Anstruther was back from Spain, and called to tell of her adventures there. Carlyle was greatly interested, especially in what she had to report of the old Duke of Wellington's battlefields, not much visited now, and he himself already mainly forgotten by the Spaniards, which brought forth some bitter moralising from Carlyle.

She had liked the Spaniards, who seemed 'a proud, haughty, independent race', and a 'very abstemious and temperate people'. She had been much interested in Charles V, and so Carlyle presented her with a book of Sir William Stirling Maxwell's, *The Chief Victories of Charles V.*

## XXI

## SUMMER AWAY FROM HOME

(1878)

NEUBERG'S photograph was still hanging in the bedroom in Cheyne Row, the unused pipe which had been Neuberg's last gift was still on Carlyle's writing-table or safe among his papers ; and in June he called to enquire for Neuberg's sister, whom he found an old woman now, although younger than himself,—safe home from Naples, shaken by fever, and confined to her room. He was asked if he would see her.

'By all means I will go to her,' he replied, 'if she will see me.' He accordingly went upstairs to her room, and 'took both her hands and spoke to her so affectionately and encouragingly that . . . she was overcome' at first, although later she felt better for the visit.<sup>1</sup>

When the summer was more advanced, Carlyle returned to Scotland, and was staying in the neighbourhood of Ecclefechan when Mrs. Anstruther went to see him. He had been unable to repeat his visit to Ballikinrain, and she decided to go to Dumfries to meet him, but the arrangement finally was that Miss Aitken should accompany him to Annan where Mrs. Anstruther could join them.

She left Ballikinrain by an early morning train, and reached Annan shortly after noon. To her delighted astonishment, Carlyle himself was on the platform to meet her, and they adjourned to the Buck Hotel, a short walk away. They talked eagerly, paying no attention to the crowds that had collected here and there for a sight of Carlyle, who of course had been recognised.

Mrs. Anstruther records that he told her as they walked that he had another book on Spain for her, by Baritti, which she should have as soon as he had an opportunity of sending it to her. At the Inn, a table was spread for lunch, but as the food took a long time to appear, and 'the landlady came in and announced there was no beef in Annan—to make beef tea for the poor philosopher', Carlyle remarked: 'Then the only thing for us to do is to fall upon the wine', of which two bottles had been placed on the table.

<sup>1</sup> *Macmillan's Magazine*, August, 1884, p. 297.

Mrs. Anstruther plied him with questions about the political situation and Disraeli, so that he soon forgot about the delayed luncheon in expressing his candid opinion of 'that Jew impostor'. 'How long he is to continue deceiving the people of England I do not know. . . . But it is a strange spectacle. It is chiefly among the fashionable people in London and at the Clubs that the fashion sets to praise up this man. He is a good-natured sort of man I believe, but troubled by no conscience. Ever since the days of Dan O'Connell, who said that he was presumably descended from the impenitent thief, he has been a curse to this country. . . . He has done great harm to the Queen, persuading her to believe anything. Then by giving her this title of Empress of India he secured her good will. "Peace with honour" indeed! There is no peace at all. He has provoked the enmity of Russia, instead of conciliating her and gaining a friend and a powerful ally.'

He told Mrs. Anstruther that he had been reading his *Frederick the Great* again, profoundly thankful to be done with it, and he referred to the Hyndford papers, of which only half were in the British Museum, the other half having been in Mrs. Anstruther's possession a few years before. She had given them to Sir Windham Anstruther, and now he was unwilling to hand them over to the British Museum, which Carlyle had asked her to suggest he should do.

After lunch, which arrived eventually, he proposed a walk about the town, but it was almost time for Mrs. Anstruther's train, and so they could only walk direct to the station, Carlyle entertaining her on the way with reminiscences of his schooldays in Annan. After she had been seen off, Carlyle and his niece had to drive home to Scotsbrig. While the horse was being harnessed, he drew her attention to the wine that had been paid for, and was now to be left behind unconsumed; and he drank it off. On the way home, he remarked, patting her shoulder: 'Well, Mary, we've had a pleasant visit—but we're both rather drunk!'—at which she protested vigorously that she had taken nothing but water.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Told as a joke in Allingham's house on October 30, details supplied by Alexander Carlyle to D. A. W. See *William Allingham, A Diary*, p. 267.

## XXII

## A 'FAREWELL GIFT' TO TYNDALL

(1878)

THE same Mr. Higginson who was brought to Cheyne Row by Froude in 1872 returned six years later with Moncure Conway,<sup>1</sup> and 'found the kindly laugh' of the old man still in evidence. Carlyle told him that he 'was a man left behind by time and waiting for death', and so indeed he seemed; but the visitor was impressed by 'the affectionate way in which he spoke of Emerson, who had just sent him the address entitled *The Future of the Republic*. Carlyle said, "I've just now been reading it. The dear Emerson, he thinks the whole world's like himself; and if he can just get a million people together and let them all vote, they'll be sure to vote right, and all will go very well." And then came in the brave laugh of old, but briefer and less hearty by reason of years and sorrows.

Among other occasional callers was a son of Joseph Neuberg's sister, young Mr. Frankau, a barrister, who long afterwards treasured books he received from Carlyle, and said<sup>2</sup>: 'He was very good to me, and a visit often finished with a pleasant walk together.' In 1878 he brought his sweetheart, about to become Mrs. Frankau, and was asked: 'Is this young lady a London production?' After forty-five years Mrs. Frankau said<sup>2</sup> she had felt shy and noticed how very weak the old man was.

Professor Tyndall was another to whom Carlyle presented books, and he tells of a 'farewell gift' he received this year. His experiences in Germany had often turned the talk to the Fatherland, and to its greatest son, Goethe. Once Tyndall chanced to quote in an article the poem *Mason Lodge*, which had been translated and published in *Past and Present*. The article afterwards appeared in a German translation, when of course it became necessary to find the original poem; but none of his friends in Berlin knew it, so he went down to Chelsea to enquire. Carlyle 'promptly crossed the sitting-room and took from a shelf the required volume.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Carlyle's Laugh", by T. W. Higginson, *Atlantic Monthly*, October, 1881, p. 465.

<sup>2</sup> To D. A. W.

<sup>3</sup> *New Fragments*, by John Tyndall, pp. 355-7 and 48-9.

Tyndall noticed that he seemed 'surprised to find me fairly well acquainted with *Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre*, declaring that, as far as his knowledge went, the persons were few and far between who showed the least acquaintance with Goethe's "Three Reverences"—reverence for what is above us, reverence for what is around us, reverence for what is beneath us. To this feature of Goethe's ethics Carlyle always attached great importance. . . .

'I had various talks with him about Goethe's mistaken appreciation of the *Farbenlehre* as the greatest of his works. To Carlyle this was a most pathetic fact. The poet thought he had reached the adamant of natural truth, and alas! he was mistaken. But, after all, was he mistaken? Over German artists the *Farbenlehre* had exercised a dominant influence. Could it be all moonshine? Thus he mused. While holding firmly to the verdict that with regard to theory Goethe was hopelessly wrong, I dwelt with pleasure on the wealth of facts which his skill and industry had accumulated.'

Tyndall went to Cheyne Row, as Carlyle had twice missed him in calling for him. 'He was then in his eighty-third year,' he said, at the Royal Institution,<sup>4</sup> 'and looking . . . towards that portal to which we are all so rapidly hastening, he remembered his friends. He then presented to me, as "a farewell gift", the two octavo volumes of letter-press, and the single folio volume, consisting in great part of coloured diagrams,' which Goethe had sent him exactly half a century before; they embraced the *Farbenlehre*, *Theory of Colours*, and were accompanied by a long letter from Goethe of June 14, 1830, shortly before the poet's death.

In optics Goethe's theory was untenable, although he had distinguished himself in anatomy and discovered the metamorphosis of plants. He had taken to science to compose his mind among the worries of politics, when honest men of sense had to stand alone between the raging revolutionaries and clamorous reactionaries.

One day when Tyndall went to visit his dying friend Clifford, the mathematician, he was shown a book about Germany whose author was one 'Thomas Carlyle, Barrister-at-law'.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> On 19.3.1880. See footnote, p. 142, *Athenæum*, No. 4124, 10.8.1912.

<sup>5</sup> *New Fragments*, by John Tyndall, pp. 377-8.

'The subject is one which Carlyle might be expected to handle,' Clifford remarked; 'the style is, to some extent, that with which we are so well acquainted, still, the book is one which nobody, knowing Carlyle, could suppose him to have written at any period of his life.'

Tyndall called at Cheyne Row next day to elucidate the matter.

'Oh,' said Carlyle with a laugh, he reports, 'that was "the Miracle".'

'There was in Annandale a second Thomas Carlyle,' Tyndall explains, 'whose cleverness, when a youth, caused him to be looked upon as a prodigy. Both he and the other Thomas sent from time to time mathematical questions to a local newspaper, and answered them mutually. Here Carlyle's extraordinary memory and narrative power came into play. He ran some centuries back, struck into "the Miracle's" family history, and traced it to that hour. While studying at the University of Marburg, I had one morning been startled by the intelligence that Thomas Carlyle, *der Engländer*, had arrived in that historic town. On enquiry, however, I found that it was not my Carlyle, but Carlyle the Irvingite,<sup>6</sup> who had come on a visit to Professor Thiersch. It was, in fact, "the Miracle". The Professor, a very distinguished Greek scholar and a pious man, had just joined the Irvingites, hence the visit of "the Miracle". Carlyle spoke with feeling regarding what he considered to be the decadence and spiritual waste of his namesake and competitor, who, when he came to Marburg, had, I was told, the rank and function of an "Apostle".'

### XXIII

#### MADAME NOVIKOFF AGAIN

(1878)

BY October, 1878, Madame Novikoff was back in London, and much with Carlyle. He was 'always full of encouragement' for her. On the 6th she wrote to Stead that she had 'spent a charming couple of hours' with him: 'The dear old man! He seemed really, actually glad to see me, and repeatedly said so!'

<sup>6</sup> See *Carlyle Tull Marriage*, Book I, Chapter XI.



'Have you heard from Mr. Stead?' she asked him.

'Oh, merely when there was something written by you in his paper, and I am very thankful to the editor for not failing to send it me. It is most excellent. But politics are a sore subject nowadays. With our *damnable* Premier one is ashamed of what is going on.'

They went out walking together, continuing their talk in the open air, drove in an omnibus and ended at her hotel. In parting he begged her to name any day she liked for him to come to her: 'Before three,' he said. 'Then we'll have another drive, but in a carriage, which is supposed to be a kind of promotion. You know I never thought last year I'd see you again. So strange that I am still alive!'

In one of her articles, she compared the English, making war upon Sher Ali the Afghan because he refused to receive an ambassador at Kabul, to Frederick William beating a man with his walking-stick to teach him to love him.<sup>1</sup>

When next she called, on October 22, he exclaimed as soon as he saw her, 'Ay, ay, I think your article very good and interesting. I am not going to pay you any compliment, but it is perfectly true. I did not know the anecdote about Frederick William, but it answers to his character. He used to say, "Look straight in my face when I am speaking to you."'

One afternoon this month when Madame Novikoff was unwell and could not join Carlyle on a drive they had arranged, Stead took her place.<sup>2</sup> When they chanced to pass Regent's Park and the Zoological Gardens, Carlyle mentioned that he had only visited the place once—'the sight of a little trembling mouse fascinated by the gaze of a snake had so haunted him that he vowed never to return.'

As the three hours' drive, during which conversation had been desultory, was almost over, he told Stead, who faithfully noted it down soon: 'There is no more work for me to do. I cannot write. It was a sore trial to me when I could no longer guide my pen. If I try, my fingers give a great splurt over the paper and I have to give it up. I used rather to like my handwriting, but that is all passed. I cannot dictate. When I have tried, I never can say what I want. I use twice as many words and don't make my meaning half as clear. I must just wait and suffer until I am called hence. I have often asked myself whether it

<sup>1</sup> *The M.P. for Russia*, by W. T. Stead, II, pp. 6-8 and 26.

<sup>2</sup> *The Life of W. T. Stead*, by F. Whyte, I, pp. 59-60.

would not be right to take oneself off and put an end to this wearisome waiting, but I have never been able to see it in that light. The idea that each of us is a soldier on duty till he is dismissed, and that no one has a right to desert, has had great influence with me. I must just wait. I am an old man. It is not for me to say anything more. I must employ what time is still left to me to meet the Eternal.'

Before the end of November, Madame Novikoff had said her say, and her articles were printed in book form, *Friends or Foes?* She was about to depart, and wrote on November 29 to her faithful Stead:

'Carlyle and Froude came to take leave of me. The first, most kind, brought me his *Frederick*, wrote down his name with his dear old trembling hand. Leaving the room he said, "Well, I'm sure your pamphlet will have a great success." "Oh, no," replied I. "Last year's had Mr. Froude's Preface, which secured a second edition; this one has no introduction whatever." "It is quite unnecessary," decided dear Carlyle, and *kissed my hand*.'

What 'Carlyle and I had in common', she writes in her old age,<sup>3</sup> 'was our distrust of Disraeli and our sympathy with the oppressed Slavs. . . . He knew that whatever my literary shortcomings I was sincere, and that was the one golden key to dear old Carlyle's heart.'

## XXIV

### TALKS WITH ALLINGHAM

(1878)

AT the end of October, the Allinghams returned to town after six months' absence, and heard from Mary that her uncle was well.

On October 26, Allingham called at three and found Paul Friedmann with Carlyle. They drove to Regent's Park and walked about there, talking of Sher Ali and Disraeli. 'England is disgraced,' he declared. 'Never before has she had such a man at her head.'

It may have been Friedmann who mentioned, 'Heligoland is agitating to join Germany.'

<sup>3</sup> *Russian Memories*, by Madame Novikoff, pp. 80-1.





THOMAS CARLYLE, 1879

(Scottish National Portrait Gallery)

*From a portrait by Helen Allingham, reproduced by permission*

'Was there an old religious establishment there?' Carlyle asked.

'Not Heiligo, but Heligoland,' Friedmann explained, 'which in old German means a rocky and sandy island. The people were pirates and wreckers and would fain be so still. They will probably repent of joining Germany. England may some day give the island to Germany as *quid pro quo*.'

Two days later Allingham went on some business at five o'clock, and saw Carlyle after his drive come into the drawing-room in his gown and sit on the floor by the fire-side, back to the wall, his face protected from the heat by a screen that was hanging from the chimney-piece. A 'rough and sturdy young serving wench' called Rose put on his head the identical cap which features in the pictures then being done by Mrs. Allingham, who was still assiduously painting him.

The talk was of Irving—'On the whole the finest fellow I have ever come across. . . . Mrs. Oliphant's book gives no picture, except in the letters to his wife.'

Soon after, Carlyle and his niece were at Allingham's one evening, at ten o'clock, and to please him with what old people like, they showed him John Linnel's engraving of a portrait of old William Bray, aged ninety-seven. Allingham said that Linnel was approaching ninety now himself, and that he had seen in his studio a portrait of Carlyle which he had done fifty years ago. Carlyle remembered sitting for it, and said it was an entire failure as a likeness, done for a Mr. Cunningham, who would not have anything to do with it when it was finished.

On the following Wednesday, November 6, Mrs. Allingham went to paint him about noon and did uncommonly well, and her husband was delighted to hear from Carlyle that day: 'Your wife is the *only* person who has made a successful portrait of me, though many have tried.' Many people agreed with this by and by, and Ruskin praised her work at the time.

To herself Carlyle said one day: 'As far as I can make out, the best portrait-painter who ever lived was one Cooper, in Cromwell's time. When painting Cromwell, Cromwell told him to put in the wart, and he did. I have spent much time in studying Cromwell's physiognomy.'

'Every day,' she says, 'he asked after "Allingham and the bairns",' but brushing gently aside congratulations on

his age, 'he often expressed a weariness of life and wished to be out of it; and one day taking leave said, "Well, ma'am, I wish you all prosperity, and that you may not live to be eighty-two."'

It was in the course of an afternoon drive in the middle of this month (November) that he told Allingham of the death of his uncle Tom in 1816. What led to it was his slowness in climbing into the usual hired carriage, and his remark: 'I feel I may die any time.' Allingham asked if he had ever in early life thought himself near death, to which he answered, 'Never.' He had once as a boy come very near to being drowned, and had had to promise his mother not to go into deep water again—an incident which he had described a little while ago to Mrs. Anstruther in Annan—but probably that was not what Allingham had meant by his question.

He went on to speak of what he considered the folly of Tyndall and others who concerned themselves with the origin of things, and declared: 'I long ago perceived that no man could know anything about that. But that the Universe could come together by Chance was, and is, altogether incredible. The evidence to me of God—and the only evidence—is the feeling I have deep down in the very bottom of my heart of right and truth and justice. I believe that all things are governed by Eternal Goodness and Wisdom, and not otherwise; but we cannot see and never shall see *how* it is all managed.'<sup>1</sup>

## XXV

## THINKING OF DEATH

(1878)

A NEW codicil was added to Carlyle's will this month, making Sir James FitzJames Stephen an executor and trustee in place of John Forster.

Of the many walks and talks on Sundays which they had together, Stephen made no record; but doubtless he told all he knew of men and things in India, and would not omit his best stories. Some Indians interested in an Appeal to the Privy Council killed an idiot upon a hill-top

<sup>1</sup> *William Allingham, A Diary*, pp. 265-8 and 271-2.

as a sacrifice to those distant unknown Gods ; Episcopalian litigants humdrumming to that Court about wafers and chasubles appeared to Stephen little wiser and morally rather worse. ' My clients' real object,' he declared, ' is to get as much idolatry as possible into the poor old Church of England.'<sup>1</sup> Though Stephen continued Utilitarian and modestly felt himself a ' Pig Philosopher ',<sup>2</sup> he was good company, and particularly welcome because his cheery courage was a pleasant counterblast to the dreariness of certain other companions. Not a ' Pig ' at all did he seem to Carlyle, but a huge Molossian dog, a superlative watch-dog, and as such, since he was willing, the fittest trustee and executor to join with Froude in the will.

On December 3, Allingham found Browning in the drawing-room at Cheyne Row, talking earnestly about Beaconsfield, who had ' honoured ' him with a little conversation. As if to change the subject, Carlyle broke in : ' And here's Allingham ! '

He met the Premier once himself, perhaps this year, through the ' diplomatic adroitness ' of a lady friend, which Venables compares to that of Boswell over Dr. Johnson and Wilkes.<sup>3</sup> ' The objection was not on Lord Beaconsfield's part. Carlyle had probably no ill-will, but he was disturbed at the prospect of meeting a stranger ', as men over eighty are apt to be. However, he always found it hard to say ' No ' to a woman, and to please this lady friend, consented to make an appointment ; ' but at the last moment sent a message to say he could not come.' Whereupon she went and fetched him, ' and the two veterans had a friendly conversation. When they parted Carlyle made a courteous speech that if he had known Lord Beaconsfield earlier, he might perhaps have omitted certain things which he had written.'

The fact was that however amiable and good-natured Beaconsfield might personally be, and however disposed to be friendly, Carlyle could not overlook the evil effects of his policy, or wish to seek his better acquaintance ; and the honour Disraeli had sought to confer on him some years before imposed no obligation to modify his views of that policy, and of the man responsible for it.

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Sir James FitzJames Stephen*, by Leslie Stephen, pp. 384-5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 202-3.

<sup>3</sup> " Carlyle in Society and at Home," by G. S. Venables, *Fortnightly Review*, May, 1883, p. 635.

On December 4, his eighty-third birthday, he was out in the carriage with Mary and Mr. Graham and Mrs. Lecky. This winter Lecky found that he had had to give up long walks and take to daily drives instead, and once a week Lecky went with him, and often Mrs. Lecky too. 'He likes his friends to accompany him,' said Lecky,<sup>4</sup> 'though he is often wrapped in silent gloom, weak, melancholy, exceedingly tired of life and gradually sinking.'

On this birthday drive, he noticed the Allinghams on their way to Cheyne Row with birthday greetings. He stopped the carriage and shook hands with them, presumably making an appointment for the next day, when he drove along the Embankment with Allingham and Mary, and halted for a good look at Cleopatra's Needle, putting his head out of the window. As he leaned back he said, 'Ah, yes—old Egyptian hands made that a long time ago.'

They drove on to Tower Hill, and Allingham put a question which he 'had often wished to ask':

'Do your thoughts ever turn to another life?'

'Oh, every day and every hour,' he answered, slowly adding, as if thinking aloud: 'We know nothing. All is and must be utterly incomprehensible. Annihilation would be preferable to this state I am in. But I hold with Goethe—

The Future hides in it  
Gladness and sorrow . . .

'That is very fine,' he said, continuing to the end of the quotation; as he repeated the last words, 'with special distinctness', they were 'driving slowly with frequent stops through the dingy crowded Minories and Leadenhall Street.'

By and by he remarked: 'A thought that bewilders me sometimes is the prodigious number of human beings who have come and gone.'

'Against this,' Allingham suggested, 'we can set the immeasurable Space around us and its innumerable Worlds.'

'I care very little about the stars,' he replied. 'I look round upon my fellow-creatures.'

'But the multitude of mighty Globes is a physical fact, as much as any other,' his companion persisted.

'Yes,' Carlyle said, and let the subject drop, remarking only, 'One thing Browning told me the other day was a saying of Huxley's,—"In the beginning was hydrogen." Any man who spoke thus in my presence I would request

<sup>4</sup> *Memoir of W. E. H. Lecky, by his Wife, p. 131.*



to be silent—"No more of that stuff, sir, to me! If you persevere, I will take means, such as are in my power, to get quit of you without delay." <sup>5</sup>

His Journals show that what angered him was both the flippant mockery of earnest faith and the dangerous dogmatism. Science is knowledge, not speculation, and to joke about faith or the unknowable was in the worst of taste.

## XXVI

## FRIEDMANN ON BISMARCK, &amp;c.

(1878)

IN the carriage once with Carlyle and Allingham, this December, Paul Friedmann talked at large on Prussian affairs, vituperating Bismarck as a despot. Allingham was surprised to see Carlyle attentively listening, and not defending the Chancellor, and thought: 'He seems to have got fresh light on Bismarck's character lately.'

'I hear,' said Carlyle, 'he is a terrible fellow at eating and drinking.'

Friedmann confirmed this in detail, concluding, 'He says himself he never gets drunk, but his friends do not say so.'

His secretary Busch had just been describing him as temperate in food, like Frederick, and maybe that, and certainly Busch's book, was mentioned.<sup>1</sup> Allingham wanted to know if it was authentic, to which Friedmann replied: 'Oh, yes, it could not have been published without Bismarck's full consent. His object is to keep himself before the public.'

The subject shifted to morganatic marriages, and Friedmann gave many details. 'I never heard of the left hand being used. The ceremony is in no way peculiar, nor the status of the wife. The only difference is in the succession of the children.'

Thereafter Allingham declared he thought it absurd to write histories of 'centuries' or treat as real such arbitrary sections, to which the others agreed. Carlyle was watching the driver, saying more than once that the man was going

<sup>5</sup> William Allingham, *A Diary*, pp. 268-70.

<sup>1</sup> Presumably Busch's *Bismarck und seine Leute*. Allingham did not name the 'secretary', but Busch must have been the man.

wrong, and at last he suddenly thrust his head out of the window and 'roared':

'Where in the Devil's grandmother's name are you going?'

He knew the roads well and often put the drivers right, according to many witnesses.

One Saturday soon after this the same party was driving in Richmond Park, and Friedmann had a pleasant topic, making Allingham happy by saying that the Germans were returning to Kant, whereat Carlyle 'said as often before':

'Kant's notion of Time and Space struck me very much. I have felt greatly oppressed in thinking of the long duration of Time Past, and Kant offered a relief in the suggestion that Time may be something altogether different from what we imagine. I have no kind of definite belief or expectation whatever as to the Future—only that all will be managed with Wisdom, the very flower of Wisdom.'<sup>2</sup>

## XXVII

### IN THE CATHEDRAL AND ABBEY

(1878)

ON Sunday, December 29, Allingham accompanied Carlyle on a 'bus ride as far as Charing Cross, after which, as it was raining, he suggested that they should visit St. Paul's. Carlyle agreed, remarking that he had not been there for many years.<sup>1</sup>

They went up the west steps and entered by the right-hand door, when Carlyle, pulling off his broad hat, and looking around, remarked: 'Ah, this is a fine place!' They walked up the centre aisle together, arm-in-arm, and found seats behind the congregation; but of the voice of the preacher they could hear only the sound, not the words. Allingham urged that they should stay and hear the organ.

'There is no doubt a very fine organ,' Carlyle replied, 'and the *Amen* comes like nothing else in the world.' But though it might be worth hearing, it was not worth waiting to hear, and he added impatiently: 'We can hear nothing,—let us go.'

<sup>2</sup> *William Allingham, A Diary*, pp. 270-3.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 272-4, correcting Froude (*T. C.*, IV, pp. 451-2).

They slipped out of their places and examined the Wellington monument, and afterwards walked up and down the Churchyard and gazed up at the dome. 'Ay, it's a bonny thing,' Carlyle commented, and spoke again of his first impression of it in 1824. He was full of praise for Wren and his works, describing Chelsea Hospital as thoroughly adapted for its purpose, well contrived, and well built. It was odd, Allingham suggested, that there was not a single street in London called after Wren.

On 'the five or six Sunday afternoons following', Carlyle went to St. Paul's with his niece to enjoy the organ.

One day Froude persuaded him to go with him to Westminster Abbey, perhaps inspired by Allingham's success, and as an inducement held out Dean Stanley, whom Carlyle admired, and who was to preach.

'The experiment proved dangerous,' Froude relates. 'We were in the Dean's seat. A minor canon was intoning close to Carlyle's ear. The chorister boys were but three yards off, and the charm of distance was exchanged for contact which was less enchanting. The lines of worshippers in front of him, sitting while pretending to kneel, making their responses, bowing in the creed by habit, and mechanically repeating the phrases of it, while their faces showed that it was habit only, without genuine conviction; this and the rest brought back the feeling that it was but play-acting after all. I could see the cloud gathering in his features, and I was alarmed for what I had done before the service was half over. Worst of all . . . the Dean did not preach, and in the place of him was a popular orator, who gave us three-quarters of an hour of sugary eloquence. For a while Carlyle bore it like a hero. But by-and-by I heard the point of his stick rattle audibly on the floor. He crushed his hat angrily at each specially emphatic period, and groans followed, so loud that some of the congregation sitting near, who appeared to know him, began to look round. Mrs. D——, the Dean's cousin, who was in the seat with us, exchanged frightened glances with me. I was the most uneasy of all, for I could see into his mind; and at the too florid peroration I feared that he would rise and insist on going out, or even, like Oliver, exclaim, "Leave your fooling, sir, and come down!" Happily the end arrived before a crisis, and we escaped a catastrophe which would have set London ringing.'

London may have been then more easily shocked than

now, when the whole of the authors in town might go to the Abbey any day and walk out in a body in the middle of the performance without being noticed. But except in the fancy of Froude there was no danger. Carlyle was not the sort of man to make a scene. Few men of eighty-three could sit through the unaccustomed experience of a boring discourse without some slight fidgeting.

Soon after, Allingham asked if he thought of going to St. Paul's again, perhaps to hear the sermon this time.

'I think not!' Carlyle retorted, 'after what I got at Westminster Abbey last Sunday!'

'How did you like the preacher?' Allingham enquired.

'Like him?' he echoed, glaring. 'I felt a very strong appetite to lay my stick about his head! I did not say this aloud, but I thought it emphatically.'

'What was the sermon about?'

'Oh, something about adversity and affliction, and what fine things they are. I should say *he* would be highly unwilling to undergo the slightest affliction he could escape.' Then, raising his voice: 'Oh, it's perfectly horrible—what was once a religious worship! He would have been greatly surprised if he could have looked into me and have seen the strokes that were prepared for him, and the kicks on his seat of honour.'

However much age mellowed him, it could never eradicate his abhorrence of sham; and the worst sham of all was the ritual and humbug of the pulpit that had taken the place of what once had been a genuine instinct for worship in the heart of mankind.

## XXVIII

### IN THE COMPANY OF FROUDE

(1878)

FROUDE was increasingly a frequent companion of Carlyle's walks in Hyde Park and Battersea and Kensington, and in the omnibus rides which displaced them as age brought a decline of bodily vigour. When these excursions began to present difficulty, he took to driving daily in a fly, out towards Harrow, and to Sydenham and Richmond and elsewhere. But he remained as always

'impervious to weather—never carried an umbrella, but, with a mackintosh and his broad-brimmed hat, let the rain do its worst upon him.'

On the omnibus, he must have fresh air, and took the seat near the door when he could get it. He was a well-known figure, to conductors and passengers alike, and from all he received the highest respect. Froude relates that once a stranger on the box remarked that the 'old fellow' ad a queer 'at,' to which the driver retorted: 'Queer 'at! Ay, he may wear a queer 'at, but what would you give for the 'ead-piece that's a inside of it?'

'London housebuilding was a favourite text for a sermon' from Carlyle, Froude goes on. 'He would point to rows of houses so slightly put together that they stood only by the support they gave one another, intended to last out a brief lease with no purpose of continuance, either to themselves or their owners. "Human life," he said, was not possible in such houses. All real worth in man came of stability. Character grew from roots like a tree. In healthy times the family home was constructed to last for ages; sons to follow their fathers, working at the same business, with established methods of thought and action. Modern houses were symbols of the universal appetite for change. They were not houses at all. They were tents of nomads. The modern artisan had no *home*, and did not know what home meant. Everything was now a makeshift. Men lived for the present. They had no future to look forward to, for none could say what the future was to be. The London streets and squares were an unconscious confession of it.'

In walks with Froude, the sight of the suffering poor in the slums recalled the proposals he had made long ago to help emigration, and he still insisted on the duty of those in power to draft the congested crowds to Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, where, with land to cultivate and pure air to breathe, they might recover sanity of soul and limb.

'He used to speak with real anger of the argument that such poor wretches were wanted at home in their squalid alleys, that labour might continue cheap. It was an argument worthy only of Carib cannibals.'

'I should not have known what to make of this world at all,' he said once, 'if it had not been for the French Revolution,' and added: 'I thought that it was the abolition of rubbish. I find it has been only the kindling of a dung-

hill. The dry straw on the outside burns off ; but the huge damp rotting mass remains where it was.' In this connection he hit off Thiers : ' Dig where you will, you come to water.'

' Well might Jeffrey,' says Froude, ' say that Carlyle would not have known poverty if he had not been himself a giver. His own habits were Spartan in their simplicity, and from the moment when he began to earn his small salary as an usher at Annan, the savings of his thrift were spent in presents to his father and mother and in helping to educate his brother. I too can bear witness that the same generous disposition remained with him to the end. In his later years he had an abundant income, but he never added to his own comforts or luxuries. His name was not seen on charity lists, but he gave away every year perhaps half what he received. I was myself in some instances employed by him to examine into the circumstances of persons who had applied to him for help. The stern censor was in these instances the kindest of Samaritans. It was enough if a man or woman was miserable. He did not look too curiously into the causes of it. I was astonished at the profuseness with which he often gave to persons little worthy of his liberality.'

An interesting sidelight on Carlyle's generosity, so often carried out in secret, is provided by an anecdote of John W. Kennedy, a Hawick bookseller, who tells<sup>1</sup> that one day many years ago a woman came into his shop to buy a new edition of *Sartor Resartus*. He asked if she was an admirer of Carlyle's, and was told that she was not, but that the book was for the old woman next door who got a pension from Carlyle.

## XXIX

### A HINT FOR 'LIBERAL THINKERS'

(1878-79)

**M**ONCURE CONWAY was busier than usual this winter, ' the prime mover in organising a society to be called the Association of Liberal Thinkers '. Huxley was fit President, and his son has told how Conway appeared

<sup>1</sup> In a letter to D. W. M.

in his father's house, 'well set up and handsome, with alert eyes and finely moulded features set in a crisp abundance of silvering hair.'<sup>1</sup>

While he was in the midst of these activities, Conway went to see Carlyle, and talked about the worship of force with which his name was associated.<sup>2</sup>

'But what conception of Force have most people?' Carlyle demanded. 'Only some mere brutal and blind elements, while the real Force proceeds in silent and quiet ways, seeming small, but really irresistible.'

'That appears not unlike that force of Natural Selection of which Darwin has written,' Conway replied; 'by which some small variant in the direction of a larger and finer species starting in some hardly perceptible differentiation gradually grows into a new race.'

'And why should not that be the real history of Nature?'

'I believe it is,' Conway said, 'but it is not such a pleasing thing to me as I thought it when Emerson preached it and Charles Darwin announced his theory. What are we to make of the agonies and horrors of Nature? Or what of the deformities and miseries of human nature? The theological theory is that all these things are to be redressed and compensated in a future world. Do you believe that all those swarming criminal, debased, drunken people are to live for ever?'

'Let us hope not!' Carlyle exclaimed, laughing. 'It might astonish you if I were to give my notion of where all these horrible things come from.'

With that, they rose and went out for a walk. They had not gone far before they were plunged into a thick yellow fog, which Carlyle described as 'one expression of the superlative ugliness of so many people crowded together'.

Emerging from the dimness came the tall figure of Leslie Stephen, his thin red beard spreading like a fan, the forehead showing wrinkles now above the clear blue eyes. He turned and walked with them for a while.

'On our way,' Conway continues, 'we encountered a repulsive beggar, who asked for money, and Carlyle began to fumble in his pocket. One of us gave a coin to the beggar, and Stephen said he would no doubt spend it in the nearest gin-shop.'

<sup>1</sup> Conway Memorial Lecture, 1921: *Ethnology*, by A. C. Haddon, and address by Dr. Leonard Huxley, pp. 3 and 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Autobiography* of Moncure D. Conway, I, pp. 359-60.

“Very likely,” said Carlyle; “no doubt it will be a momentary comfort to the poor fellow.”

They may have discussed the *Liberal Thinkers* or the *Science of Ethics* which Stephen then had on the stocks; at any rate, one Christmas afternoon when Conway had called at Cheyne Row with wishes for a Merry Christmas, Carlyle dropped a blunt hint.

‘Ah, yes,’ he replied to Conway’s seasonal greeting; ‘I had forgotten; but just now passing the public-house at the corner, I remarked that the crowd was larger and drunker than usual, and then I remembered that it was the birthday of their Redeemer.’ He went on to ‘speak with solemn feeling about religion, saying finally with animation, “There is but one real religion—*passionate love of the good, passionate abhorrence of the reverse.*”’

The words were spoken with emphasis, and then he added quietly, like a political corollary from what he had been saying, a kind of quiet reminder to ‘Liberal Thinkers’ of what they could not deny but might forget: ‘Its aim is simply to get the best man in power and the worst man chained!’

One day Froude brought Sir Garnet Wolseley to call on Carlyle, who had expressed a desire to see him, and Froude relates: ‘He was much struck with Sir Garnet, and talked freely with him on many subjects. He described the House of Commons as “six hundred talking asses, set to make the laws and administer the concerns of the greatest empire the world had ever seen”; with other uncomplimentary phrases. When we rose to go, he said, “Well, Sir, I am glad to have made your acquaintance, and I wish you well. There is one duty which I hope may yet be laid upon you before you leave this world—to lock the door of yonder place, and turn them all out about their business.”’

Indeed, it seems that Carlyle entertained some hope that Wolseley might lead a league of patriotic Britons who would take control of the country and govern it for its own good and not for that of party:—a hope that was patently doomed to failure. But it is interesting, in view of the experiments other countries are now making in that direction. We are beginning to learn that Carlyle was right when he denounced the dangers of democracy. His nephew Alexander reported, incidentally, that the last attempt he made at literary composition was a fresh warning against those dangers; he regretted the loss of his power to write most acutely



because he foresaw so clearly the turmoil and chaos and strife that must come, and longed to open people's eyes to what lay ahead. The chaos is ours now, but only suffering will teach us sense; meanwhile we cling to worn-out shibboleths and hope still to muddle through.

## XXX

## DARWIN'S SON REPORTS

(1879)

IN March, a son of Charles Darwin, William, a banker of thirty-nine, was reading the *French Revolution* and was happily inspired to call upon the author of it and write and tell his mother.<sup>1</sup> Carlyle was on the point of going out for his afternoon drive, and took the visitor with him. Darwin would naturally speak of what he had been reading, and reports: 'His face was quite in a glow with an expression of fury when he talked of . . . the French Revolution, and he raised his hands and said,—"It was the most wonderful event in the world, twenty-five millions rising up and saying,—'By the Almighty God, we will put an end to these shams!'" . . . Rewriting the first volume he said was the hardest job he had ever had, that he had not a scrap of note or reference, and it was like trying to float in the air without any wings.'

Darwin missed a good deal on account of the street noises around them as they drove. When he raised the 'Metaphysics' his father's theory had made the fashion, he heard Carlyle say, along with much that he did not catch: 'I thought at one time that I should have gone mad with all the horror and mystery of the world and my own difficulties, if I had not come across Goethe. Goethe always carried about with him a feeling of the perplexity of things and of the misery of the world.'

'Goethe did not feel the French Revolution anything to the extent that you did,' Darwin suggested.

'That is true,' the old man agreed. Afterwards he added: 'Goethe was always prosperous, while I had to struggle with money difficulties. He was far the greatest living in my times. He was very kind to me. Every three months

<sup>1</sup> *A Century of Family Letters*, Emma Darwin, II, pp. 235-7.

or so a box of curiosities, books, etc., used to come to me in Scotland.' There was real sorrow in his voice as he said, 'Want of money prevented me ever seeing Goethe.' Presumably in reply to questions, he continued: 'Goethe believed he should live again. He used to write to me openly about it. When his son died of drinking at Rome, all he said was,—"My son has stayed behind in the Eternal City."'

The Cardinal's hat that had just been given to John Henry Newman brought up his name, and Carlyle remarked: 'He is a kind, affectionate man, who is much afraid of damnation, and hopes to creep into Heaven under the Pope's petticoats.' And then he added: 'But he has no occiput.' Darwin assured his mother, 'It is very true that Woolner's bust shows he has no back to his head.'

'Do you ever read any of your own books again?' Darwin wanted to know, and was told that he had read the *Frederick* all through, and seemed to have enjoyed it. When he asked after his companion's father, Carlyle remarked, 'with a grin': 'But the origin of species is nothing to me!'

'It was very interesting,' William Darwin concluded, 'and he talked very easily and without any condescension, or oracularly.'

### XXXI

#### DECLINING HEALTH

(1879)

SOON after writing to his brother John on February 8, Carlyle became seriously ill, and was unable even to dictate letters. The trouble was thought to have begun with a chill, and the 'action of his heart'. He became, Allingham noted, 'alarmingly weak. He ceased for a time to drive out: was very languid and slept much: he sometimes looked very sunken and low.

'One day,' Allingham goes on, 'I went down and creeping into the drawing-room found him asleep on the sofa:—creeping back again I met Ruskin coming up the stairs, by appointment. Mary said it was time to awaken him and did so. They greeted each other affectionately, and Ruskin

knelt on the floor, leaning over Carlyle as they talked. Carlyle began to speak of Irish saints, and referred to me for some account of Saint Bridget and her shrine at Kildare, to which I added that Bridewell, that is St. Bride's well, had come to mean a prison.

'This seemed to interest Ruskin particularly, and he remarked, "We make prisons of the holiest and most beautiful things!"'

'He then took leave, very affectionately kissing Carlyle's hands; and he and I walked together to my house where he greeted Helen with much *empressement*, and sat for about an hour looking at her drawings.'<sup>1</sup>

Froude reported to Madame Novikoff on the old man's health: 'Carlyle is not well. He grows weaker daily, and when told that if he goes out he will catch cold, and hurt himself, he says that is just what he wishes to do, that he may die and be well out of it.'

Once there was a talk with Tennyson on the burden of old age:

'In my old age,' the poet declared, 'I should like to get away from all this tumult and turmoil of civilization and live on the top of a tropical mountain! I should at least like to see the splendours of the Brazilian forests before I die.'

'I would also like to quit it all,' Carlyle agreed.

'If I were a young man,' Tennyson went on, 'I would head a colony out somewhere or other.'

'Oh, ay, so would I, to India or somewhere: but the scraggiest bit of heath in Scotland is more to me than all the forests of Brazil. I am just twinkling away,' Carlyle concluded, 'and I wish I had had my *Dimittis* long ago.'<sup>2</sup>

On March 4, Allingham went to Cheyne Row about 2.15 p.m., and found Carlyle complaining that Mary had ordered the carriage. He wanted instead to go in the omnibus, his favourite excursion, and Allingham volunteered to take him, as the carriage had not yet arrived. So they set off, walking slowly to Oakley Street, where for the first time for many weeks he boarded a 'bus.

'The conductor showed special attention,' Allingham noted, 'and Carlyle got his favourite seat, namely, next the door on the left-hand side—that on which the conductor's perch is. At Temple Bar we got out, and he con-

<sup>1</sup> *William Allingham, A Diary*, p. 275.

<sup>2</sup> *Alfred Lord Tennyson, A Memoir*, by his Son, II, pp. 236-7.

sented to come into the Middle Temple, where he said he had never been before in his life. We entered, after a slight demur of the janitor (it being Sunday), by the gate and lane leading to the porch of the Temple Church. "Close by," I said, "is Goldsmith's grave." "Where is it?" said Carlyle, and crept slowly on my arm till we stood beside the simple but sufficient monument, a stone about coffin length, and eighteen inches high. I read aloud the inscriptions; Carlyle took off his broad-flapped black hat saying, "A salute." I followed his example, and thus we stood for a few seconds. When our hats were on and we were turning away, Carlyle laughed and said, "Strange times, Mr. Rigmarole!" Then, "Poor Oliver!—he said on his death-bed, 'I am not at ease in my mind.'"<sup>3</sup>

Another day, Carlyle remarked, 'Black's *Oliver Goldsmith* is worth nothing at all, he gives no credible Goldsmith.' Friedmann, who was with him, told him that the *Vicar of Wakefield* was given to young Germans for their first book in English.'

'I read the *Vicar* again lately,' Carlyle replied, 'and was disappointed.'

In talk with Tennyson once, he said: 'Goldie was just an Irish blackguard with a fine brain and sun-like eyes, and a great fund of goosery.'

'And of tender-heartedness,' Tennyson added: 'I love Goldie.' He made Carlyle laugh by giving a humorous imitation of Dr. Johnson and Goldsmith talking together, after which Carlyle remarked that Goldsmith was 'much read in Germany in Goethe's time.'

'You know we visited Goethe's house at Weimar,' Tennyson replied. 'The "Salve" on the door-mat, and the legion of Goethe's old boots there, looked to me terribly pathetic.' He went on to tell how he and his son had found a book on Goethe's table, with the inscription: 'From T. Carlyle', which pleased the old man immensely.

They 'made merry' over the statues of Goethe and Schiller in the market-place, 'for all the world like drunken sailors quarrelling over a wreath', and Carlyle went on:

'Ay, ay. Art is at a low ebb; and among the nations England, unless she takes great heed, will go down to the devil.'

'Come,' his friend protested. 'We are not so bad as in Charles II's reign.'

<sup>3</sup> William Allingham, *A Diary*, pp. 276-7.

'Oh, yes, there were more Andrew Marvells then. True, the Parliament was so coxcombed at having cut a king's head off that there was no doing anything with them. Those days indeed were very like the days now, no real strong ruler, all just a confusion of jackassery.' His epithet for Gladstone was 'the man with the immeasurable power of vocables'.

'I love the man,' Tennyson said, 'but no Prime Minister ought to be an orator.' They went on to speak of Macaulay, which recalls Carlyle's declaration that Trevelyan's *Life* of him would long outlive anything Macaulay himself had written.

'Macaulay, Guizot, Hallam and I went over the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Hall together,' Tennyson said. 'Macaulay said to me on going away, "I am delighted to have met you, Mr. Tennyson"; but I never saw him afterwards.'

'Eh, Alfred!' Carlyle cried, looking at him grimly, 'Macaulay was afraid of you, you are such a black man!' He concluded with a tremendous guffaw.<sup>4</sup>

The last public appearance Carlyle made was on March 5, when he went with Allingham to hear his friend, the 'charming story-teller W. R. S. Ralston, recite and interpret his fairy-lore in St. James's Hall'. The affair was for the benefit of the innocent unfortunates who had suffered through the failure of the City of Glasgow Bank, who had Carlyle's deep sympathy. Carlyle did not stay very long, although he seemed to enjoy particularly one of the fables from the *Russian Folk-Tales*, 'The Witch and the Sun's Sister'.

On April 14, Froude wrote to Madame Novikoff again, with reference to his own *Caesar*: 'Yes, I meant to give you a copy, and I will, if it turns out worth your acceptance; but Carlyle tells me that "he can get no good of it", that "it is not clear", "not well done"—that in short it is a failure. He reduced me by his criticisms to the condition of a "drenched hen", one of Voltaire's expressive images, and I almost believe he must be right. But other people begin to give a kinder report of the book. . . . If the public verdict is more favourable, the book shall be sent to you. Carlyle grows weaker.'

Carlyle had said of the book: 'It tells me nothing of Caesar'—a criticism the significance of which should not be missed.

<sup>4</sup> *Alfred Lord Tennyson, A Memoir, by his Son, II, pp. 235-6, 241.*

Another of the friends who saw him, early this summer, and made a report, was Mrs. Sabine Greville, who wrote to Tennyson in June : ' I cannot tell you how enormously curious and interesting it is to listen to Carlyle. His hands shake with a sort of palsy, so that his meat must be cut up for him : he feels this with painful acuteness. This is the only sign of age. He can walk any distance. He surprised me by putting Browning next Alfred Tennyson. He has the tenderest contempt for the fellow-creatures he despises, and mixes up in his conversation the dead, the living, and characters in fiction with the greatest method. He said, " Alfred from the beginning took a grip at the right side of every question." He cares for goodness more than genius, and the *truth* of " The Grandmother " *quite* upset him—he kept saying, " Poor old body, poor old body. And Alfred wrote that : well, I didn't know it." ' <sup>4</sup>

As soon as Carlyle was well enough, he decided to see once more the old familiar places of his youth, which each year past for some time now he had never thought to see again ; and so he went to Dumfries with Mary, and spent the summer months in a furnished house there, to be near his brother.

An intelligent young gardener, who had seen him often visiting the grave of his parents at Ecclefechan, told John Burroughs<sup>5</sup> that on the final occasion he was now so feeble that he had to be supported by two people while he walked into the cemetery, where he remained ' long and reverently ' at the grave-side. Burroughs appropriately quotes the reference in *Past and Present* to the Chinese custom of visiting the tombs of ancestors every year. It is likely indeed that the knowledge of this suggested to Carlyle the annual visit, which he continued because he found it good.

He was also seen, but recognised by few, as he walked through Haddington to the ruined abbey where his wife was buried. He went in, and stood for a while by her grave, as if reading once more the epitaph. Then he moved away, as quietly as he had come.

A visit to Scotsbrig this summer lingered long in the memory of his nephew John, the son of James Carlyle who lived there. The other nephew James, of Newlands, Kirtlebridge and Craigenputtock, had been driving him about the country in a gig in the rapid way he liked ; and not

<sup>5</sup> *Fresh Fields*, by John Burroughs, pp. 89, 90 ; *Past and Present*, Book III, Chapter XV.

far from Scotsbrig they tied the horse, and Carlyle walked with John to the top of 'the hill' there, which he used to climb for the sake of the view. They stood looking all round for a while, then came down; but when near the foot Carlyle stopped and said, 'Let us go up again, John,—it'll be the last time.' So up they went and he had his last loving look upon the countryside from 'the hill' on Scotsbrig farm.<sup>6</sup>

This summer Allingham had decided on a holiday in the north, and had travelled by Lancaster, Carnforth, and the Lake District to Dumfries, where he called at The Hill, and was greeted by Mrs. Aitken. The Doctor, he was told, was very ill, had had a doctor to see him, 'but you know he has no belief in medical skill.' Carlyle was at Moffat. His niece Mary had just married her cousin, Alexander Carlyle, and the young couple had come to join the old man there. So Allingham went on to Moffat as well, to the Buccleuch Arms. He was taken up to Carlyle's room, where he was given a warm welcome, and after lunch they drove to the De'il's Beef-Tub.

In the evening, the talk naturally turned on Burns—Allingham had made a sort of pilgrimage in Dumfries, and had dipped into a *Life* of the poet. Allingham stayed overnight, and drove next day with the others to Ecclefechan, whence the Carlyles went on to meet James at Newlands. In the afternoon, they came back to pick up Allingham, who had made his little pilgrimage to the old man's birth-place, and who noted, when they stopped for half an hour at Lockerbie: 'Carlyle sat in the carriage as before, I leant over the side and talked to him. While we talked a biggish man came out of the inn,—like a comfortable farmer, and bearing a general resemblance to Carlyle, as many of the men do here—he advanced to the carriage, took off his hat, and said in a slow distinct voice without any expression in his face or tone, "I request the honour of shaking hands with you, Sir; I understand you're Mr. Carlyle." Carlyle looked at him, and after some seconds said, "Who *are* you, Sir?" The other, a little taken aback, "O, I'm only a farmer in the neighbourhood—I'm an admirer of your writings, Sir, and I wished to shake hands with you. I asked permission to shake with the grandson of our national poet, Robert Burns, at Lockerbie Station,

<sup>6</sup> Told by John Carlyle, repeated in various newspapers in obituary notices of him.

and it was granted to me." Carlyle slowly took off his glove and gave him a thin, brown hand. "Ye're lookin' fresh, Mr. Carlyle," says the farmer. "Fresh," returns Carlyle.—"I'm very old and very weak"—whereon the farmer, taking off his hat again, withdrew, while Carlyle muttered, "I wish you well, Sir." '7

## XXXII

## CLOSE OF THE YEAR

(1879)

**S**HORTLY after Carlyle's return to Chelsea in the autumn, his brother John died, on September 15; but the old man could no longer record his grief. He was growing steadily weaker himself, wearing away, waiting for death. Henry W. Nevinson, who as a young Oxonian had been influenced by his books, went one afternoon to Cheyne Row about the time of the usual drive, and found the brougham standing ready. Soon the door opened, and the 'slightly bent old figure' came down the steps, 'supported by Froude'. He was wearing the familiar loose cloak and wide-brimmed hat, and Nevinson noticed that as he came down, the 'aged grey eyes' were 'turned for a moment to the racing clouds' before he entered the waiting carriage.<sup>1</sup>

Just after his return to London, from his own holiday trip, on October 18, Allingham walked to Cheyne Row with his small son, and met the old man about to set off for his drive. He 'shook hands with Sonny', aged three-and-a-half, and said, 'Ah, he's a bonny lad!' Another time, when the youngster had solemnly held out his hand and lisped, 'How do you do, Mr. Carlyle?' he had put 'a hand on the curly head', and remarked, 'Oh, this is a very good kind of article!'<sup>2</sup>

On December 4, Carlyle's eighty-fourth birthday, Allingham and his wife called, finding Mrs. Lecky there, Browning and Ruskin just gone. The old man was 'on his sofa by the window, warm and quiet, wearing a new purple and gold cap', and there were 'gifts of flowers on the table'.

<sup>1</sup> *William Allingham, A Diary*, pp. 278-81.

<sup>2</sup> *Changes and Chances*, by Henry W. Nevinson.

<sup>3</sup> *William Allingham, A Diary*, pp. 277 and 284.



## XXXIII

## VARIOUS FRIENDS

(1880)

EARLY in the New Year, Colonel Davidson of Haddington called and sat a long time talking with Carlyle. He had been an old family friend of Jane Welsh, whose father had been his family's physician. The talk was at first about the Knox Institute at Haddington, to which Carlyle had contributed handsomely.<sup>1</sup> Davidson described the opening, and 'mentioned that in the few words I said on the occasion I had noticed the fact that, having got all the education I ever had in the same school in which Knox began his, I was bundled off to India at the age of sixteen; but I carried with me such an impression of what Knox had done for Scotland, that, on occasion offering, I had been the means of instigating the first direct tax in India for education, somewhat on Knox's plan; and that, by a singular coincidence, at the very time I made this proposal, another boy was being educated at the same Burgh School who, afterwards, as the first Director of Education, was employed in the supervision of the very schools that were so initiated; namely, the son of his old friend, Provost Dods.' Whereat Carlyle cried emphatically: 'Ah, that was just *another work of Knox!*'

The Colonel referred to the statue placed over the entrance to the building, and Carlyle regretted that it had not been executed by his friend Boehm (whose name he carefully spelt) from the likeness of Knox that he considered the only authentic one.

Davidson alluded to a recent visit to the town, and to Dr. Welsh's grave there, which brought forth from Carlyle a deep sigh, and the words: 'And the daughter lies there too!' He returned to the subject of Knox to make an earnest request that Davidson would have a tree planted to mark the site of the house where Knox was born, so that it might be visible from the churchyard.

'A tree will not last long,' Davidson objected.

'Oh, yes,' Carlyle replied, 'an oak will last a long time.'

'Perhaps,' the Colonel suggested, 'as long as the world, which seems to be getting into its death-throes.'

<sup>1</sup> *Memories of a Long Life*, by Col. Davidson, pp. 335-7.

'No, no,' Carlyle retorted; 'the world will last a long time yet!'

He went on to explain the need for some such identification mark as he suggested.

'A good many years ago, some ladies who were on a visit to the big house close to the Nungate——'

'Amisfield, I suppose,' Davidson supplied.

'Yes, on a visit to Amisfield—wished to see the spot where the great Reformer was born, and had wandered into the Nungate, near to the Gifford Gate; where, accosting an old wife, they asked if she could show them where John Knox's house was. "What's your wull?" said the old body, who was very deaf. "We want to see John Knox's house," screamed the ladies. "John Knox's hoose? *John Knox's hoose?* That's it ower there, and yon's John Knox himsel', sittin' at the door.'"

After the laugh that followed the spirited recital of this anecdote, Carlyle remarked that his visitor's hair had grown very white.

'Yes, I am getting old, and sometimes feel like one standing in the vestibule, waiting to be called into the presence of the King,' the Colonel replied. Carlyle respected his naïve faith, and only said: 'Well, it's no use living if we cannot do some good in the world.'

The arrival of another visitor broke into their conversation, and Colonel Davidson presently took a 'hasty and last farewell'. The tree was duly planted in the garden that once belonged to the home of Knox's parents. The Colonel took part in the ceremony—the tree was planted by the lady who gave the ground—and he told then how Carlyle had suggested it; the tree is visible from Mrs. Carlyle's grave.

Another old friend who came to see Carlyle was Gavan Duffy, who in the spring returned to Europe, and called at once at Cheyne Row. 'It was touching,' he reports, 'to see the Titan, who had never known languor or weakness, suffering from old age. His right hand had to be supported by the left when he lifted it to his mouth. His talk was unaltered.'<sup>2</sup>

'It takes a long time to die,' Carlyle told him, with a twinkle in his eyes, adding, 'I am well enough, except from the effects of decay, which are rarely beautiful to see. My chief trouble is to be so inordinately long in departing. It is sad to have survived early friends, and

<sup>2</sup> *Conversations with Carlyle*, by Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, pp. 252-6.

the power of work. . . . I cannot dictate with satisfaction. I found, when I dictated, the words were about three times too many. Composition is in fact a process which a man is accustomed effectually to perform in private, and which cannot be effectually performed in the presence of any person whatever. But I have written more than enough. If anybody wants to know my opinions, they are not concealed. . . . I have scattered much seed by the wayside, which is as good as lost, leaving no visible issue behind. If it was sound vitalised seed it may perhaps spring up and blossom after many years; if not, in Heaven's name, let it rot.'

Duffy mentioned having visited in Paris the house of Robespierre in the Rue St. Honoré, where the iron stairs he had so often trodden were still in existence. 'It is from such seemingly insignificant fragments,' Carlyle said, 'that history has to reconstruct the past, or some semblance of it more or less credible, an operation rarely performed with success.'

One afternoon by appointment Gavan Duffy accompanied him and Mary on their usual drive, going to Streatham through Clapham Common, and home by Battersea Park. The old man's voice, talking of things suggested by the localities they passed through, was often drowned by the noise of the road, so feeble had it become. He took occasional sips of brandy, and 'solaced himself with a pipe'.

Later, he spoke of Dickens and Thackeray, finding Dickens's chief faculty that of a comic actor. His readings showed that he had the power, and might have made a great success on the stage. Thackeray had far more literary ability, but was lacking in real convictions, except that a man ought to be a gentleman, and ought not to be a snob.

### XXXIV

#### TYNDALL, ALLINGHAM AND OTHERS

(1880)

ON Wednesday, March 10, Allingham met Carlyle's carriage in the street, and Mary alighted and gave him her place. As they drove through the Parks, Carlyle lay back 'crookedly in his corner, noticing nothing

of the outer world', yet he seemed rather better in health, 'a dim fire still in his eyes, a dusky red in his cheeks.'<sup>1</sup>

Eight days later, Carlyle 'brightened up' when Tyndall and his wife called. They talked of Goethe's Theory of Colours, on which Tyndall was soon to lecture, as Carlyle had requested. 'I hope you'll get something out of all the labour Goethe has given to this subject,' Carlyle told him.

'Goethe has many excellent observations,' Tyndall replied, 'but his theory is wrong.'

Later, talking to Mary aside, and hearing that her uncle felt himself very weak, he remarked: 'Say what he will, I never saw him looking grander.'

He could see few visitors now, and letters had to go for the most part unanswered. Sir Bartle Frere wrote on behalf of the Prince of Wales, Albert Edward, who was to become Edward VII, to beg an interview, and when it was not granted wrote again to remonstrate, begging that the Prince might not be refused a favour which had been accorded to so many of his mother's subjects.

Carlyle's nephew had to repeat the negative, for his uncle only said: 'I am too old. He might as well come and see my poor old dead body.'<sup>2</sup>

On Monday, April 19, Allingham arrived at half-past two to find Carlyle on the sofa, just awakened, and Lecky sitting by him. All three went out driving, the favourite route by Hyde Park and Regent's Park. He told them he had been reading Shakespeare yet again, '*Othello* yesterday all through, and it quite distressed me. Oh, what a fellow that is—honest Iago! I was once at this play at Drury Lane, and when Emilia said—

O the more angel she  
And you the blacker devil!

a murmur swelled up from the whole audience into a passionate burst of approval, the voices of the men rising—in your imagination—like a red mountain, with the women's voices floating round it like blue vapour, you might say. I never heard the like of it.'

To Allingham the simile, interpreting sound by colour, seemed curious; it is simple enough to anyone who has seen a volcano in eruption. The voices of the men meant

<sup>1</sup> *William Allingham, A Diary*, pp. 285-6.

<sup>2</sup> Told to D. A. W. by Alexander Carlyle many times.

readiness to kill and were fitly compared to fire and lava ; while the voices of the women, not importing bloodshed, were fitly likened to the blue vapour floating around the erupting crater. As they say in the East, a man with mind enough can understand the whole world, without leaving his study.

Lecky recalled a remark of Macaulay's, that an Italian audience would look upon Iago as a comic character, and added : ' I have seen the play in Italy and found it was as Macaulay said. Tricking husbands is the habitual occupation of the Comic Man of the Italian stage.'

Nevertheless, Italians have vehemently protested the contrary. There are Italians and Italians.

Tyndall was another of the faithful who continued to call at Cheyne Row, and could be sure of a welcome. He had been impressed by Carlyle's wonderful memory ; but none of the evidence he gives of it is more remarkable than an anecdote of the days when he had begun to find in him ' a tendency to somnolence, which contrasted strongly with the brisk and fierce alacrity of former times.'<sup>3</sup> On one occasion when this frailty of age was specially in evidence, he found Carlyle, when he called, seated before the fire, with Browning, whose reverent affection as he spoke seemed delightful.

' We entered into conversation,' Tyndall reports, ' which, in Carlyle's case, was limited to the answering of a question addressed to him now and then. I was aware of the poet's habit of early rising, and of his hard work, and I wished to know something of the antecedents of so strenuous and so illustrious a life. Mr. Browning's father and grandfather came thus to be spoken of. Carlyle seemed at length to rouse himself. " Browning," he said, " it was your ancestor that broke the boom stretched across the Foyle, and relieved Derry, when the city was besieged by James's army." He named the ship. " Surely not," I said ; " it was the *Dartmouth*." In saying this, I relied more upon songs committed to memory in boyhood, than upon historical knowledge. Carlyle was right. The relief of Derry is described by Macaulay, who has given honour to whom honour is due.'<sup>4</sup> Micaiah Browning was the hero of the occasion, master of the *Mountjoy* and a Londonderry man.

<sup>3</sup> *New Fragments*, by John Tyndall, pp. 388-9.

<sup>4</sup> *History of England*, by Macaulay, Chapter XII.

On another visit, Tyndall noticed on the sitting-room table two copies of Emerson's collected works, with the inscription: 'To Thomas Carlyle with unchangeable affection from Ralph Waldo Emerson.'

'That is as it ought to be,' he said. 'You and Emerson must remain friends to the last.'

'Aye,' Carlyle replied, 'you are quite right. Take the volumes with you, but return them punctually.'<sup>5</sup>

When, this year, Moncure D. Conway was starting for America, Carlyle entrusted him with a message: 'Give my love to Emerson. I still think of his visit to us at Craigenputtock as the most beautiful thing in our experience there.' A month or two later Conway saw Emerson, whose memory was nearly gone, but 'the one name that required no suggestion was Carlyle. When he received the message I brought, his face beamed with the old intelligence.'<sup>6</sup>

## XXXV

### YOUTH AND AGE

(1880)

ON Tuesday, May 18, at about two o'clock, the maid ushered into the drawing-room two schoolboys, orphan sons of the sculptor Alexander Munro, who had died nine years before. Their mother was a daughter of Robert Carruthers, a Dumfries man and long an editor in Inverness. One of the boys wrote home at the time, reporting the interview.<sup>1</sup>

Carlyle was sitting in front of the fire in an armchair, propped up with pillows, with his feet on a stool, and wearing 'a sort of coloured night-cap, and a long gown reaching to his ankles, and slippers on his feet. A rest attached to the arm of his chair supported a book before him. I could not quite see the name, but I think it was Channing's works. . . .

'We advanced and shook hands, and he invited us to sit down, and began, I think, by asking where we were

<sup>5</sup> *New Fragments*, by John Tyndall, p. 354, footnote.

<sup>6</sup> *Emerson at Home and Abroad*, by Moncure D. Conway, p. 63.

<sup>1</sup> *Thomas Carlyle*, by W. H. Wyllie, pp. 363-5; and see the *Brunswick Magazine Archiv*, June, 1899, pp. 329-30.

living. He talked of our father affectionately, speaking in a low tone as if to himself, and stopping now and then for a moment and sighing. He mentioned the last time they met . . . "and then he went away to Cannes and died," and he paused and sighed. "And your grandfather, he is dead too." This was Robert Carruthers, who he said had done much good work, writing several books of reference, and explaining who the people mentioned in Boswell's *Life of Johnson* were.

'He asked what I was going to be,' the boy goes on. 'I said I was not sure, but I thought of going to college for the present. He asked something of which I only caught the words "good scholars". I said I hoped we should turn out so. He said there could be no doubt about it, if we only kept fast to what is right and true, and we certainly ought to, as the sons of such a man. He strongly exhorted us to be always perfectly true and open, not deceiving ourselves or others, adding something about the common habits of deceit. He went on, "I am near the end of my course, and the sooner the better is my own feeling." He said he still reads a little, but has not many books he cares to read now, and is "continually disturbed by foolish interruptions from people who do not know the value of an old man's leisure."' "

'His hands were very thin and wasted; he showed us how they shook and trembled unless he rested them on something, and said they were failing him from weakness.' After some further questions:

"Well, I'll just bid you good-bye." We shook hands. . . . "I wish you God's blessing, good-bye." We shook hands once more and went away. He seemed such a venerable old man, and so worn and old looking that I was very much affected,' the young reporter concludes.

'In the height of the summer', Mrs. Oliphant called, rather late one afternoon, when he was in the carriage for his customary drive, 'encumbered with wraps though the sun was blazing'. All he had time to say to her was, 'They will not understand that it's Death I want—all I want is to die!'

She came again soon after, and saw him seated in the drawing-room, in the 'last languor' of extreme old age, and yet so 'courteous, full of old-fashioned politeness' that he 'tottered to his feet to greet his visitor'. He showed her his recently arrived grand-nephew, the new

Thomas Carlyle, the first-born child of his niece Mary and his nephew Alexander, who were living with him. 'A bonny little mannikin,' he called it. It was very curious, he told her, 'to contrast the new-comer with the parting guest', and as the baby seemed to push him away as he watched it, he burst into 'one of those convulsions of broken laughter . . . which were part of his habitual utterance. Thus I left him, scarcely restrained by his weakness from his old habit of accompanying me to the door. For he was courtly in those little traditions of politeness, and had often conducted me downstairs upon his arm, when I was fain to support him, instead of accepting his tremulous guidance.'<sup>2</sup>

Lecky thought him this summer reviving as they drove about together, 'better and more cheerful than I have seen him for a long time, and having just had his hair cut gave him a sort of juvenile appearance.'<sup>3</sup> He was greatly interested in his niece's baby, 'our baby', as he spoke of it in the Scottish fashion, and he called it 'an odd kind of article', adding: 'It is strange that Shakespeare should once have been like that.'

As the year wore on, his strength began to ebb fast, and he frankly longed for death. He was re-reading Shakespeare, and often quoted his favourite passage again:

We are such stuff  
As dreams are made on, and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep.

Another favourite, which he compared to 'the sound of distant church bells', tolling for the dead, was:

Fear no more the heat o' the sun,  
Nor the furious Winter's rages;  
Thou thy worldly task hast done,  
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages.

Most of this year, as Lecky afterwards told Gavan Duffy, Carlyle was very weak. 'I used to drive with him regularly once a week, chiefly to light his pipe and lift to his lips a tonic which he had to take, as he could do neither himself, and he used to sink into long unbroken silences.'

Mrs. Anstruther was ten days in town in July, and called several times. In February, he had sent her a book she

<sup>2</sup> Article by Mrs. Oliphant in *Macmillan's Magazine*, April, 1881, pp. 482 and 494-5.

<sup>3</sup> *Memoir of W. E. H. Lecky*, by his Wife, pp. 142-8 and 240.



enjoyed,—travels in Spain by an American. She found him now, as she confided to her note-book, 'frail and feeble in body, melancholy and sad in spirit'—the natural result of chronic malnutrition—his power of assimilating food was lessening dangerously. 'He can no longer take his daily walk, but drives. . . . However, he had been reading as much as ever, and talked a long time one day.' He told a story of Ruskin—some clergyman inviting him to dinner was answered, 'I will not eat with you, drink with you, live with you, but I will walk with you.'

He had a 'short though rather bad turn of illness' this month, which his niece, reporting to his sister in Canada,<sup>4</sup> attributed to the heat. 'He is exceedingly weak, hardly able to walk fifty yards without help, and yet until about ten days ago . . . he was what one might call for him very well. He generally spends his mornings till about half-past two o'clock between lying on the sofa, reading in his easy chair, and smoking an occasional pipe; at half-past two he goes out to drive for two or two and a half hours, sleeps on the sofa till dinner time (half-past six), then after dinner sleeps again, at nine has tea, reads or smokes or talks, or lies on the sofa till bed time, which is usually about midnight, and so ends the day. He looks very well in the face, has a fine, fresh ruddy complexion and an immense quantity of white hair, his voice is clear and strong, he sees and hears quite well; but for the rest, as I have said, he is not good at moving about. In general he is wonderfully good-humoured and contented; and on the whole carries his eighty-four years well.'

But it was the beginning of the end, and he became steadily weaker. It was probably after this short illness that Sir Lewis Pelly saw him, and found him looking aged, 'bent and hopelessly sad'. 'I lifted my hat to him, but he did not seem really to recognise me, and so he disappeared into the London Library.'<sup>5</sup>

When Moncure Conway, shortly before his return to America, went out driving with him, he 'found it painful to have to bend so close to catch the words which when caught showed the intellect still abiding in its strength.'

Carlyle was reading again the German books which had influenced his youth, and when the talk turned on his

<sup>4</sup> *Carlyle's Letters to his Youngest Sister*, edited by C. T. Copeland, pp. 259-61 and 254-5.

<sup>5</sup> *Fortnightly Review*, May, 1892.

eightieth birthday, he declared: 'It was one of the unpleasantest days I ever passed. Few people know how miserable a thing is life when the strength has gone out of it. Some of my friends lately sent a doctor here, but it would have been just as useful to pour my ailments into the shaggy ear of a jackass. I said to him, "The only benefit you could do me would be to mingle some arsenic with this cup of tea, but as the law forbids that, there is no reason for your remaining professionally." He was a sensible sort of man.'<sup>6</sup>

It was Dr. Maclagan. Froude had been present, and reports that the medical man's 'usual enquiries' were answered thus: 'I think very well of you, sir. I expect that you will have good success here in London, and will well deserve it. For me you can do nothing. The only thing you could do, you must not do—that is, help me to make an end of this. We must just go on as we are.'

Dr. Maclagan continued to attend, but he had to address his 'usual enquiries' to somebody else thereafter.

Matthew Arnold had been for some years an occasional caller, and once when he had taken his daughter Nelly with him they sat talking for more than an hour. The old man 'was very easy to get on with and very kind to Nelly', shaking hands with her warmly in parting, and saying, 'You are just entering life—I wish you a clear and prosperous course.'<sup>7</sup> This year Arnold called again; and perhaps it was the self-complacency visible on the countenance of the beatified school inspector, in the National Portrait Gallery picture, that either suggested or gave unusual currency to what Carlyle is reported to have said on the occasion of this last visit.

'Poor old Carlyle! It is all over with him,' had been Arnold's report; and London grinned to hear that when asked his opinion of the reporter, Carlyle had 'sized him up' more accurately than politely: 'Poor Mat! He thinks that God Almighty might try very hard, but He could never make another Matthew Arnold!'<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *Autobiography of Moncure D. Conway*, II, p. 104, and *Thomas Carlyle*, by Moncure D. Conway, p. 137.

<sup>7</sup> *Letters of Matthew Arnold*, II, p. 139.

<sup>8</sup> *Personal Recollections of European Celebrities*, by General J. G. Wilson, 6th Paper; reported by many others as well.

## XXXVI

## THE LETTERS AND MEMORIALS

(1880)

APPOINTED by Carlyle to edit the *Letters and Memorials*, and having undertaken apparently on his own account to write a *Life*, Froude was now anticipating the end, that could not be far off, and the *Reminiscences* were already in print. He was far advanced in breaking up the *Letters and Memorials* into bits to be used in his biography, in direct breach of his promise to edit them for separate publication, for which he was to be most liberally remunerated by the profits of the whole publication.

Someone who wished him ill apparently told this to Carlyle, which led to a talk the origin of which Froude himself apparently did not suspect: 'One day about three months before his death,' he writes, 'he asked me very solemnly, and in a tone of the saddest anxiety, what I proposed to do about the "Letters and Memorials". I was sorry—for a fresh evidence at so late a date of his wish that the Letters should be published as he had left them would take away my discretion, and I could no longer treat them as I had begun to do. But he was so sorrowful and earnest . . . that I . . . promised him that the Letters should appear with such reservations as might be indispensable.'

He could not foresee the squall that the *Reminiscences* would raise, and was probably acting in perfect good faith when he gave to the world a picture of Carlyle that immediately raised a storm of indignant protest from the many friends who had known and loved him. At any rate, it is pleasant, and creditable to Froude, that he kept the promise he had to make with regard to the *Letters and Memorials*.

But Carlyle himself was no longer in a condition to be interested in what was to come. He was visibly sinking, and Tyndall records that he took him a gift of a 'small supply of extremely old pale brandy' (the kind he liked), and 'a few of the best cigars that I could find'; but when he went to see him thereafter, he found that he had hardly touched either. 'Thinking them worth a trial,' Tyndall goes on,<sup>1</sup> 'I mixed some brandy and water in a tumbler,

<sup>1</sup> *New Fragments*, by John Tyndall, pp. 389, 390; and a paper by Tyndall in 1881, quoted in the *Quarterly Review* and in the *Review of Reviews*, August, 1897.

and placing a cigar between his fingers, gave him a light. The vigour of his puffs astonished me ; his strength as a smoker seemed unimpaired. With a view to supporting him, I placed myself on the sofa behind him.'

He asked for 'some last word of advice to remember', and was answered, simply: 'Give yourself royally.'

After a little, Carlyle put aside the cigar half finished and drank off the brandy-and-water, saying, with a smile, 'That's well over.' He soon fell asleep, and Tyndall gently relinquished his position and slipped away.

Thomas Ballantyne's daughters used to speak to friends of the kindness they had received from Carlyle after their father's death.<sup>2</sup> One of them married John B. Plumer, of Totnes, Devon, who had had an interview with Carlyle, and who, happening to be in London this October, called by his wife's wish at Cheyne Row to enquire after him, since he was reported to be in failing health. Carlyle received him personally, and Plumer reported: 'He did not seem to recognise me at first, until Mrs. Alexander Carlyle reminded him that I had married Miss Ballantyne, when he at once said, half in soliloquy,—“Thomas Ballantyne was the first man who took any notice of me,”' referring to 1855. He took Plumer in his brougham from Chelsea to Hyde Park, and though he was ill was so fond of fresh air that he had both the windows open; 'but perceiving that I was afraid of the draught,' Plumer concludes, 'he at once seized the window strap and insisted on having the window closed.'

On October 24, Allingham called, to tell him of his visit to Haslemere and Tennyson, and found him 'feebler in look and voice'. A few days later, he took Mary home to Cheyne Row from an evening with himself and his wife, and went in with her to find Carlyle, at 11 o'clock, in the drawing-room reading a new edition of Burns. 'He often reads in it (Mary said), notes and all, without his spectacles,' Allingham recorded. 'He again said he found Burns "the greatest since Shakespeare."' They talked afterwards of Campbell, and *Lochiel* and *The Mariners of England* Carlyle praised, going on to repeat four or five stanzas of *The Battle of the Baltic*, which, he said, had made a great impression on him as a lad. 'Never was anyone so sagacious in divining his enemy's plans and whereabouts,' he said of Nelson, and recalled how he had heard, as a boy often, of his death. A neighbour came and told his mother about a

<sup>2</sup> Letter from John B. Plumer, 10.2.1899, to D. A. W.

tremendous battle that had been fought, in which the French and Spanish fleets had been wiped out—and Nelson killed. ‘I could not understand all,’ Carlyle said, ‘but I recollect I had much more grief for his death than joy for the victory.’

When Lecky came, he found Carlyle ‘still able to take in a little reading’, and so he read to him some of Burns’s letters—‘the last book, I think, he tried to read.’<sup>3</sup>

By November, Carlyle was so weak that he found it hard to climb the two stairs to his bedroom, and an old red bed that came from Craigenputtock and was now ‘packed away in the study’ was accordingly replaced where it used to be, in the room behind the drawing-room on the first floor, the room that was formerly Mrs. Carlyle’s. He was not confined to bed, but was more in it than usual, and occasionally old friends saw him there.

Madame Novikoff, in London this autumn, had stayed away from fear of wearying him, until she heard that he was enquiring, ‘Why does not Madame Novikoff come to see me?’ Thereupon, she went at once to Cheyne Row.

At the beginning of the year, her collected writings had reappeared as a volume, *Russia and England*, with a new preface by Froude. It was both an indictment of Disraeli’s policy and a revelation of Russia, and was widely read and well reviewed. In the *Nineteenth Century* for March, Gladstone gave it a welcome that signified a change in the anti-Russian policy of this country as soon as he came into power, and Carlyle told Stead that had it been possible for him to write or dictate he would himself have reviewed it too. He called upon her, in company with Froude, to congratulate her upon it, seeming ‘perfectly enchanted’ by it.<sup>4</sup>

Now in November, when she came to see him, he was ‘very weak but genuinely glad to see me. He talked slowly. . . . The breaking-up of the body had in no way affected his magnificent mind. I remember his complaining to me that Froude wanted him to correct proofs on his death-bed, but that he had refused!’ These were apparently proofs of the *Reminiscences*, of which Froude was anxious to say that he had had Carlyle’s approval of his method of editing them, as if to disarm criticism in advance. But Carlyle was not concerned about them, and indeed, as they for the most part had been written fourteen years before as a means of assuaging the terrible burden of his

<sup>3</sup> *Memoir of W. E. H. Lecky*, by his Wife, p. 240.

<sup>4</sup> *The M.P. for Russia*, by W. T. Stead, II, pp. 62 and 77 and 123-4.

grief, and as he had never evinced any interest in them afterwards, he probably had little recollection of what they contained—and most assuredly never desired them to be published at the time of writing.

Madame Novikoff was deeply affected by what he told her, and 'could not keep' her 'self-possession'. She must afterwards have been led to tell of her own movements, for she concludes, 'His last words to me were, "Ay, ay, when you come back here, you will not find me alive."' She refused to say good-bye, however, and came to see him repeatedly before leaving England.<sup>5</sup>

## XXXVII

## LAST DAYS

(1880-81)

CALLING with his wife on Carlyle's eighty-fifth birthday, December 4, the faithful Allingham found him 'better and easier, more himself. He asks what I am doing,'<sup>1</sup> which seemed a hopeful sign. But twenty days later, when he came to drive with him on Friday, Christmas Eve, there was a marked change. 'He was lying on the sofa in the drawing-room. When I spoke to him he held out his hand and shook hands with me, but said nothing. I was not sure that he knew me. A stout Scotch servant girl and I lifted him to his feet', and when they had helped him from the room 'in the hall his heavy sealskin coat was put on with difficulty.'

Alexander Carlyle and Allingham both went with him in the carriage, and drove twice round Hyde Park; but most of the time 'the old man dozed.'

Edward FitzGerald, who received occasional news from Mary, wrote to his friend Herman Biddell to tell what he knew: 'Carlyle is, I suppose, fast extinguishing: I hear, has to be carried up and down stairs now—"very quiet" he is, I am told: which the Doctors count an evil sign: but when one thinks that his sensitive temperament might easily have taken another turn, surely a welcome sign—for himself, and for his Friends—who may so soon be in his plight.'

<sup>5</sup> *Russian Memories*, by Mme Olga Novikoff, pp. 81-2.

<sup>1</sup> *William Allingham, A Diary*, p. 306.

On New Year's Day, Carlyle went out for the last time. After 'a short drive of an hour or so', he felt fatigued, but did not take altogether to bed until the doctor was certain that the end was very near. Then at last, on Sunday, January 16, he did not rise; his bed had been moved to the drawing-room—'Why not stay where I am?' he asked his niece, and consented to the change only because it was apparently for the convenience of his niece and her husband, who took turns in being beside him.

The failure to assimilate food had become complete. For many days brandy-and-water and ether were all he could take, and the doctor said, 'Do not leave him alone.' To Mrs. Carlyle he explained: 'Your uncle is in no pain at all. Attempting to thrust nourishment upon him further would be worse than useless.'

A man's demeanour on his death-bed depends on his disease. In general Carlyle was either broad awake or asleep, and there was no failure of intellect. He lasted three weeks after the professional opinion was given that he would die in one, 'living on his brain,' the doctor said. On sight of Lecky, on the Thursday, January 20, 'he was just able to say three or four sentences, more than he had said since the Sunday.'

On the Saturday following, his old friend, Miss Bromley, having heard that he was sinking, came to take leave, and was gazing upon him as he lay in what was supposed to be his last sleep when he awakened, and recognised her and pressed her hand to his lips.<sup>2</sup> A few days later he had a kind of waking dream, and named brothers and sisters as if he had grown young, but that did not recur.

The 'little Charlotte' of his wife's last years, her pet servant, 'dear little woman', had long been Mrs. Mills, and a neighbour, and was now a widow. Carlyle had never forgotten her, and used to stop and speak to her when she was at her door as he passed, or met him on the road. On his death-bed now he told his niece to send for her, and she was delighted to spend some hours in his house nearly every afternoon, waiting upon him as required; and once as she was standing at the bedside talking to him of old days and of Mrs. Carlyle, he said to her, 'Sit down, Charlotte,' and she sat talking to him a long time.

During the last week he swallowed no nourishment at all, but occasionally moistened his lips with a little ether

<sup>2</sup> *The Story of My Life*, by A. J. C. Hare, V, p. 310.

and took a few whiffs of tobacco. Once he lay moaning, and his niece at the bedside supposed he was in pain, and began to weep. He opened his eyes as if awakened by her tears and looked at her, and said, 'I am not suffering any pain.' She was comforted immediately, feeling sure that he would not say so even to comfort her unless it was true.

As she wished to keep the house quiet, she confided the doctor's prophecy of speedy death to nobody but Lecky and Froude, but a few days later it was in the newspapers, and she heard from Froude that he had 'just mentioned it to Knowles'. The result was that bell-ringing and knocking went on nearly all through the night, and the dying man was kept awake.<sup>3</sup>

When Froude came to his side, he was recognised. 'I am very ill,' Carlyle told him. 'Is it not strange that those people should have chosen the very oldest man in all Britain to make suffer in this way?'

Froude, imagining that this was some mystic allusion to the Upper Powers, as he told Raymond Blathwayt afterwards,<sup>4</sup> was sure that Carlyle 'was wandering'.

'We do not exactly know why those people act as they do,' he replied, tactfully. 'They may have reasons that we cannot guess at.'

'Yes,' replied the dying man. 'It would be rash to say that they have no reasons.' Perhaps he thought Froude was wandering. He of course had been referring to the constant stream of callers, and the noise they made at the door. A woman was engaged to answer enquiries, and bulletins were pinned up, which contented the reporters and abated the nuisance.

In the last few days he seemed to dream he was at Ecclefechan. Feeling a female hand lifting his head,—'Ah, mother, is it you?' he murmured; and once he put his arms round his niece's neck and said, 'My dear mother!' But when awake there was no sign of mental weakening. Once, lying watching his niece doing something for him, he was heard to murmur in a low tone, 'Ah, poor little woman!' and it was of her baby, a few months old, that he seemed to be thinking when he said, 'Poor little Tommy!'

On Thursday, February 2, he fell into a deep sleep which lasted throughout the next day, except for a moment when his niece heard him say to himself, 'So this is Death—well

<sup>3</sup> *William Allingham, A Diary*, pp. 308–9.

<sup>4</sup> *British Weekly*, 25.8.1892.



... Next morning, the Saturday, between eight and nine o'clock, she was alone beside him and noticed that his breathing seemed to stop. Then there were one or two louder respirations, and no more.

## XXXVIII

## THE LAST CHAPTER

(1881)

THE Abbey at Westminster was offered, of course, but refused; it implied a religious service, as the place was 'a Christian Church and not a Pantheon', as Huxley had reminded Spencer a few weeks before, when solicited to use his influence with the Dean to procure the admission of George Eliot<sup>1</sup>; but happily Carlyle had himself declined it in advance. Froude quoted him as having said, 'Do not let the Body-snatcher'—Dean Stanley—'get hold of me.'

His relatives did as he had bidden them in preferring Ecclefechan, and the natives there who for years had been aware of this could not understand the clamour in the English papers. The old custom in Scotland was to bury their dead among their own kinsfolk. The funeral, on February 10, was as quiet as he could have wished. It was a clear frosty morning. A few minutes before the train came into Ecclefechan station, the snow began to fall gently, sprinkling the ground. Soon after noon, the hearse, quite plain and without 'plumes or other ornamentation', left the station. Hounds were out with the red-coated fox-hunters in the neighbourhood, and well-dressed Ecclefechan was driving in another direction to witness the installation of a new minister. They had not known about the funeral, they said; but the common people had known, and were gathered in their everyday attire to watch. Children were perched on the graveyard walls or clustered at the gate, beside twenty or thirty women 'with little shawls of various colours thrown round their shoulders' against the cold.<sup>2</sup> Inside the cemetery, waiting, were some old acquaintances and about a hundred young workmen. As the hearse drew up, the spectators reverently took off their hats and re-

<sup>1</sup> *Life and Letters of T. H. Huxley*, by Leonard Huxley, II, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Thomas Carlyle*, by Moncure D. Conway, pp. 148, 150-1.

mained uncovered. The women did not enter the churchyard, Mrs. Alexander Carlyle staying in her coach, behind a curtain. A shower of sleet fell as the big oak coffin was being lifted out, but as it reached the open grave, the shower passed and the sun shone through, lighting up the wreaths of flowers upon it.

There was complete silence but for the muffled tolling of the school-house bell, and no religious or other ceremonial at the graveside, nor, it may be added, elsewhere.

Behind the relatives the crowd drew near as the coffin was let down. Recognisable yet are Tyndall and Lecky, Froude and Moncure Conway, Carlyle of Waterbeck and others, now passed away like shadows on the screen. A few more flowers some kind women had sent were flung on the coffin. Then the earth was shovelled, and the men around ebbed away. The bell ceased its tolling.

Conway lingered to listen to the low-voiced talk of some old men of the village, and recorded that at Hoddam, enquiring after the old school-house, as he spoke with a man who had been a schoolmate of Carlyle, 'aged and shivering as he moved slowly amid the snow, he said, "Tom always sent me something every year until this last winter."' Great and small alike had shared irreparable loss.

Upon the stone at the grave the simple names and dates were inscribed ; but perhaps the most suitable epitaph would have been what Burns wrote for William Muir, the miller of Tarbolton :

An honest man here lies at rest,  
Whom many fellow-beings blest.  
He loved and spoke the simple truth,—  
The friend of man, and guide of youth :  
Few hearts like his, with virtue warmed,  
Few heads with knowledge so informed :  
If there's another world, he lives in bliss ;  
If there is none, he made the best of this.

When Tyndall unveiled the Chelsea Embankment statue, Boehm's 'labour of love', he said : 'In Switzerland I live in the immediate presence of a mountain, noble alike in form and mass. A bucket or two of water, whipped into a cloud, can obscure, if not efface, that lordly peak. You would almost say that no peak could be there. But the cloud passes away, and the mountain, in its solid grandeur, remains. Thus, when all temporary dust is laid, will stand out, erect and clear, the massive figure of Carlyle.'

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